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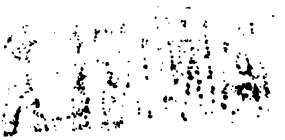

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ANNEX

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THOUGHTS

ON

THE APOCALYPSE

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THOUGHTS

ON

THE APOCALYPSE.

BY

BENJAMIN WILLS NEWTON.

V.14

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON

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Prefatory Note.

THE present volume is a reprint, word for word, of the second and last edition. The author lived nearly fifty years after its issue, and nearly sixty years after that of its first edition; and, while the whole of that time was spent in the careful study and diligent teaching of Holy Scripture, every year served to strengthen his belief in the correctness of what he has taught in this volume. Those who were privileged with his intimacy are confident that, if he had lived to send forth a third edition, its features would be unaltered. Doubtless, some expository details he would have modified—indeed, some such were occasionally mentioned—but nothing of that nature has been or could be attempted by others.

A footnote, however, on page 138, reminds the reader that since 1853, when this work was published, more light has been thrown on the original Text, chiefly through the labours of Mr. Newton's friend and relative, Dr. S. P. Tregelles; and that it is *probable* that that reading of the verse would be

87 X 48

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adopted here which is given by Dr. Tregelles in his Edition of the Greek Testament. But as this can only be a probability, the exposition is left unaltered.

In a few cases, where reference was made to incidents that were prominent when the work was written, footnotes have been added to the present issue explanatory of those incidents. They and all other additions, such as dates, etc., have been distinguished by square brackets.

December, 1904.

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Advertisement to Second Edition.

THE time that has elapsed since the publication of the first edition of this work in 1843, has afforded the author opportunity carefully to reconsider its statements, and the principles of interpretation that were then adopted. He may be permitted to say that such re-examination has strongly confirmed his conviction of the correctness of the radical principles of his former work, and (although very sensible of many imperfections) he feels increased confidence in commending the same general conclusions to the solemn attention of all, who, through faith in the blood of the Lamb, are entitled to regard the Book of the Revelation as emphatically *theirs*. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things *in the churches*."

In the present edition the author has endeavoured, in some slight degree, to obviate one objection made to his former work, viz., that it stated conclusions without sufficiently communicating the reasons on which those conclusions were founded. He has not,

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however, added *much* in the way of explanation, because he found that it would be impossible to do this without altering the general character of the work and increasing very materially its size. He would, therefore, request those who desire to consider these subjects in a more elementary form, to refer to three other works which he has published within the last five years, and which will be found to detail the reasons of many statements which are assumed as true in the present volume.*

The Greek text followed in this work is that of Dr. Tregelles; the value of whose labours in having edited a corrected text of the Apocalypse, and in preparing a critical edition of the whole Greek New Testament, it would be difficult to appreciate too highly. If Dr. Tregelles' Greek text has anywhere been departed from in the present work, it has been done inadvertently.

---

* The works referred to are these :—

"Aids to Prophetic Inquiry."
"Babylon and Egypt."
"Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman Empire."

To be obtained at the Publishers. See advertisement at the end of this volume.

The author would also recommend the perusal of "Remarks on the Prophetic Visions of the Book of Daniel," by S. P. Tregelles, LL.D., who has also published an English translation of the Apocalypse, as edited by him from the most ancient authorities.

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The author may be permitted to add, that as years roll on and events unfold themselves, he feels more and more deeply the necessity of closely cleaving to those great foundation truths of our holy faith, which (however practically departed from) are still preserved in the creeds and confessions of Protestant Christendom. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the Eternal Sonship of the Lord, His essential Deity, His *true* though sinless humanity, the perfect and present justification of all believers through His blood, the authority of Holy Writ, its being written in "words taught of the Holy Ghost" —these and other connected doctrines are to the author dearer, he trusts, than life. It is in the conviction that attention to "the sure word of prophecy" will not lessen but deepen our value for these foundation truths of our common faith, that he again ventures to solicit the attention of his brethren to these pages, which he now commends to the blessing of Him whose grace is able to pardon their imperfections, and to prosper whatever is of His truth in them.

LONDON,
October 18*th*, 1853.

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Introductory Observations.

It seems wonderful that any, who reverence the Scripture and know what true Christianity really is, should be able to persuade themselves that the history of the world has been one of progress in righteousness and in the knowledge of God. What period in the earth's history has not been marked with the plainest evidences of disastrous failure? Paradise was created, and man was placed in it innocent and happy. But man sinned, and ruin entered. After the fall, God introduced new light, unfolded His promises of grace, and granted also many natural mercies. But evil instantly put forth its energies; the arts of civilization apart from God were spread by Cain and his descendants throughout the earth; wickedness reigned; and the flood came.

When the flood departed, eight persons descended from the ark, all of them acquainted, at least outwardly, with the true God. They had seen His judgments; and, being themselves delivered, were ushered into a new world, supplied with new knowledge and fresh covenanted mercies. It was

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promised that while the earth remained, "seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night should not cease; and God blessed Noah and his sons." Thus, not in darkness and misery, but with light and blessings consciously received from God, mankind commenced their new existence in a recovered earth. Yet only a few years passed before their confederation at Babel evinced their determination to attain greatness apart from God. Scattered under His hand, yet not repenting, they gave themselves over to idolatry, which so rapidly and so universally prevailed, that even Abraham's kindred, when God called Abraham, had begun to serve other gods. So early commenced that night of heathenism under which more than two-thirds of the world is at this moment buried.

The separation of Abraham and of Israel was a bright spot in the midst of the darkness. To Israel were "committed the oracles of God." But Israel failed (as they will one day themselves confess) to work any deliverance in the earth. Their light became dim at its centre, and was at last turned into darkness, so that the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles because of *them*; and now special wrath, or, to use the words of our Lord Himself, "days of vengeance" have come upon them, and will rest on them "until the end." The Church dispensation followed. The Church, when it first appeared in the earth, maintained its testimonies not unworthily of Him whose name it

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bore. It was the pillar and ground of Truth; salt that had not lost its savour; a light set on a hill. For a season the Pentecostal Church in Jerusalem shone brightly. The Gentile Churches succeeded; and, for a while, shone also as true lamps of the sanctuary. But even before the Apostles died, decay was, in them too, visible. The Epistles, especially the later ones, were full of warning and reproof. If, said the Apostle, ye Gentiles, who have been graffed into Israel's olive tree, become disobedient and "continue not in God's goodness, ye also," like Israel before, "shall be cut off." They did *not* continue in God's goodness—worldliness and corruption reigned; until at last Christianity, perverted Christianity, casting off the likeness of Nazareth, deliberately assumed the garments of earth, and sought to reign as if enthroned, apart from Christ and His Truth; even whilst that Truth and its servants were yet suffering. Constantine and the Roman Empire were not unwilling to accept the alliance of a body that was ready to consecrate the world's energies, and to bless evil in the name of Christ. The results speedily followed. Mohammedanism, superstition, infidelity, soon spread their wings of darkness over the very regions in which the Apostles laboured; and up to this present hour those nations peculiarly sleep the sleep of a double death.

There have, indeed, been periods when God has interfered to re-kindle some light, that His Truth

might be preserved from utter extinction. But these periods of revival have not, in result, proved exceptions to the general rule. The light given (though individuals have received it and been blessed) has, as to its general reception, been perverted or quenched. The stream of evil, checked perhaps for a moment, has only gathered strength by the delay; and has either overflowed the barrier, or else forced for itself some new channel, in which it rolls on more proudly and destructively than before.

The Protestant era affords a marked example of the merciful interference of God. Protestantism found existing in the earth a body that professed to be the unfallen Church of God. The Church of Rome claimed to be what the Apostolic Church once was—"the pillar and ground of the Truth." It claimed also to have (what no Church in this dispensation ever *can* have) that place of supremacy and rule over the nations which is reserved exclusively for Israel and for Jerusalem, when the day of their repentance and forgiveness shall at length have come. This claim Protestantism rejected. The pretended Church and its Traditions were disowned, and the Bible *only* recognised as speaking with the infallible authority of God.

If Protestantism had adhered to the Scriptures only; if it had diligently sought out teachers really qualified for their service by the Holy Spirit; if it had abandoned ritualism, and faithfully maintained that all who are "of faith" are "sanctified," and, as

regards acceptance, "*perfected* by the offering of the body of Jesus once"; if it had distinguished between those who made credible confession of the Gospel, and those who manifestly were servants of the world; we should have seen in its history a spectacle far different from that which it now presents. There are, indeed, among Protestants many whom God has reserved unto Himself—men who have not bowed the knee to Baal; but what are the Protestant nations as a whole? Popery rages on the one hand, and Infidelity on the other; whilst the voice of the true Church of God has waxed so feeble as to be heard little more than the wail of a child in the midst of the fury of the midnight storm.

When Protestantism, in striking off the shackles of superstition, leads those whom it has freed immediately and only to the word of God, its work is blessed. But if, careless of Truth, or shunning conflict, it disown or hide the distinctive doctrines of the faith; if, for the sake of conciliating others, and effecting the union of men as men, it consent to unholy compromise; if natural conscience—dark, deadened conscience, be pronounced man's sufficient rule; if they who receive the Scripture, and they who mutilate or add to it, be deemed equally worthy of positions of *moral* influence in society and in government; if the mind of man, apart from the guidance of revelation, be judged competent to give right moral order to the earth; if, as has been of late affirmed, the regulations of government are to be in-

dependent of Scripture and all regard to revealed Truth—if such be the principles by which the chief of Protestant nations (aided too in these efforts not unfrequently by real Christians) is striving to stamp a new character on the earth, it is evident that success in these efforts will effect a more radical subversion of Truth, and a more effectual rejection of Scripture, than has ever been known since the light of Christianity was first kindled in the earth. The formalism of the Pharisee may be easily exchanged for the liberalism of the Sadducee; but the yoke of superstition is in vain broken if the only liberty gained be the liberty of the unregenerate mind of man. The liberty of self-will is not the liberty wherewith Christ maketh free.*

Few, I suppose, can seriously meditate on that which is now passing around them, without some misgivings as to the future. Yet if the mind be

* It may perhaps seem strange that in speaking of Protestantism we should have to refer so exclusively to its national and governmental aspect. If Protestantism had discerned the sin of the day of Constantine, and had steadily drawn the line of separation between the Nations and the Church, we should have been able to trace its history in the separate path which the family of faith would have trodden, and should have sought within that family, and not in the world, for the results of its labours. But even spiritual Protestantism early sold its energies to the nations and their governments. In fleeing from Popery it rushed into the courts and camps of those who (however they may for their own purposes resist certain ecclesiastical forms of evil) have ever hindered the developments of Truth, and will finally seek to crush them altogether. Yet even now Protestant Christians seem little aware of the path which the nations secularly are about to tread, and the end to which that path is tending.

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possessed with the thought of the dignity and perfectibility of the nature of man; if it be ignorant alike of the corruption of the human heart, and of the presence and power of Satan, it can easily deceive itself into the belief that society has within itself the elements of its own rectification; and with that thought it will satisfy itself and silence every apprehension. Others again, who have some reverence for the Scripture, knowing that it speaks of a season when the knowledge of the Lord shall pervade all nations, hastily assume that all things are happily tending towards that end, and refuse to examine what the Prophets have written respecting the conclusion of this present age of evil. Indeed, until of late, the almost universal belief of Protestant Christians has been that they had well-nigh passed through the great and terrible hour of Antichristianism—that the final judgments appointed to Jerusalem and the nations were almost exhausted, and that the course of events was rapidly tending towards the peaceful rest of the millennial day. Recently, however, many have been awakened from this fatal dream. Turning more simply to the Scripture they have found that, although the promised kingdom of peace shall at last surely come, yet we have *first* to consider the testimony of that roll long since given to Ezekiel, but not yet exhausted, whereon is written both for Israel and the nations, "lamentation, and mourning and woe." The book of the Revelation enlarges on and confirms the testimony of that roll.

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One of the chief hindrances, perhaps, to understanding the book of Revelation, has been a neglect of *Old* Testament prophecy. The prophecies of the New Testament are, of course, supplemental to those of the Old, and should be considered first. The wickedness and blasphemies of Antichrist and the nations that follow him, at the period so often termed in Scripture "the time of the end"—the unequalled season of tribulation that is to fall on Israel in Jerusalem, immediately before their final deliverance by the appearing of the Lord in glory—these and kindred subjects were familiar to the early disciples (for they were Jews who had received the testimonies of the prophets), and they were therefore prepared to receive the additional instructions of the Lord and His Apostles—instructions expressly intended to complete the outlines that had been before given.

One part of the Old Testament Scripture which has been especially neglected is that which speaks of the now approaching hour when, hardened and impenitent, Israel shall be re-gathered to Jerusalem, there to receive the last terrible inflictions from the hand of their God. (Ezek. xxii.) "Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross; all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God: Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and

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brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it, so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured my fury upon you." How little has this solemn passage been considered! Yet this is the period so often mentioned in Daniel, as "the last end of the indignation" against Jerusalem. It is the period also of which the book of Revelation, in all its visions of judgment, mainly treats.

If we consider the present condition of the Jews we cannot marvel at the sore judgments which are yet to be sent upon them. Nationally, they still remain under the weight of those awful words, "His blood be upon us and on our children": and although many are breaking the bonds with which Rabbinism has bound them, yet it is only to gain the liberty of Sadducean liberalism. Thus we find a recent and influential writer among them exultingly anticipating the time when Mohammedans, Jews, and Christians, assembling around Mount *Zion*, shall with like acceptance "all waft their orisons to that heaven, where sits in divine majesty the Lord of hosts and the God of Israel." Yet what is this but Deism? Men admire it and call it charity.

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Multitudes even of those who profess the name of Christ, in their anxiety to escape the responsibilities of definite Truth, welcome and applaud the thought. A point of union for men as men is desired; and this, negation of Truth and the pursuit of some common earthly good, most readily supply. Around such a centre the indifferentism of Pagan, Mohammedan, Jewish, and Christian scepticism can gather. Such will be the road by which men will enter on their last great confederation against Jehovah and His Christ, until they shall openly say, "Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

The rising importance of the Eastern or Greek division of the Roman Empire can hardly have escaped the observation of those who have noted what is passing among the nations. Greece, Egypt, Syria, the coasts of Asia Minor, and, in part, Jerusalem, are becoming more and more connected with the arts, civilization and commerce of Western Europe. The provinces which these and other such names represent, formed the Eastern or Greek part of the Roman Empire—an empire which we know from the Scripture will again re-appear in a corporate, though divided, form, before the closing events of "the end of the age" are ushered in. Throughout all the changes of the middle ages, the distinctness of the Latin and Greek divisions of the Roman Empire has been discernible—God having preserved them, because they are appointed, to-

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gether with Israel in Jerusalem, to form the main-spring of the world's energies during the last hours of its evil history. Greek, Latin, Hebrew, were the languages written over the Cross; and the nations which those languages represent will yet again be found in terrible confederacy against Jehovah and against Christ. At the Cross men were allowed to accomplish their purpose—no judgment was sent forth against them—it was the time of long-suffering mercy—there was then One who said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do": but the coming day of apostasy will have to be met, not by mercy, but by vengeance. God has not in reserve any other sacrifice for sins: and if that which He has provided and proclaimed be rejected—if despite be done to that Spirit of *Grace* which now bears witness to that sacrifice, nothing can remain but "judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries."

The Revelation, in its prophetic parts, belongs to the closing hour of human history. It does not profess to record the progressive steps by which, during the last 1800 years men have advanced toward their final greatness—for in that case it must have been a history of the world; it seeks not, therefore, to detail the means by which the final point of human greatness is reached; but it teaches us the *character* of that greatness, and reveals its doom. The manner and the place in which the combined apostasy of man, of Israel, and of a large section of

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professing Christendom, will be finally developed, the mode of the interference of God in chastisement, and then the mission of His Son in judgment, are declared in the Revelation. It presents to us the world already standing in full possession of its last prosperity; and then reveals the manner in which the Almighty hand of outraged goodness interferes to crush the proud power of evil, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. It reveals also, in various visions, the different aspects of the glory of those who, after having known the tribulation and endurance of the kingdom of Jesus during the period of the Truth's suffering, will share their Master's risen glory and reign with Him in life, when the time comes for Truth to be exalted.

The Revelation assumes the path of human progress to be, at present, evil; it assumes the failure of the Church's testimony; it assumes that Christ's servants will never behold the establishment of Truth in the earth until judgment shall first have wrought its work, and they have themselves been taken to their heavenly mansions of glory. This the prophets had declared; this the teaching of the Lord Jesus had confirmed; and to this the captivity of John in Patmos bore testimony. They, consequently, who are unprepared to admit these things, are unprepared to understand the Revelation. A film is on their inward eye which needs to be removed before they can receive the instructions of this Book.

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CHAPTER I.

On Revelation I.

ALTHOUGH the great object of the Revelation is to communicate instruction respecting the future, especially concerning the nations and their evil, yet before it enters on these things it first directs our attention to the condition of those to whom this instruction was addressed. It was addressed to the Churches—"I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." The Churches were numbered among "the things which are," respecting which John was commanded to write. "Write therefore the things which thou hast seen *and the things which are*, and the things which shall be hereafter." Accordingly, the Churches and their condition, especially in relation to Him who was seen walking in the midst of the candlesticks of gold, is the subject of the chapter before us, and of the two that follow.

The Church in Jerusalem—the first that had been constituted on earth, had disappeared before the

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Revelation was given. Its light had early waned; and the destruction that fell on Jerusalem finally scattered it. But the Gentile Churches, among which St. Paul had chiefly laboured, yet remained—still holding, although in diminished power, a place of united and separate testimony. Left in a world teeming with evil, and which Satan was leading into increased distance from God, they were experiencing the dangers and trials of that which is emphatically termed in Scripture, "the evil day." Called into a path of Nazarite separateness in the Truth, they had peculiar laws, peculiar principles. Subjects of a heavenly Head, taught and sustained by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, they had heavenly laws, heavenly prospects, heavenly testimonies. Whilst Israel was blinded, and whilst the nations were (what they will be to the end) fierce and devouring monsters destroying the earth, they—the church—were set as a peculiar people in the midst of peoples, a peculiar kingdom in the midst of kingdoms, having Christ risen and glorified as their Priest and King; set to confess Him thus, whilst He is yet rejected in the earth; to own their union with Him in glory, and to seek likeness to Him in suffering obedience here. The place which grace had given them *above*, was one of union with Christ in unearthly glory. They were seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, their risen Representative and their Head, and therefore a place of corresponding excellency was assigned to them in the earth

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—corresponding, I mean, as to its separateness, heavenliness of principle, and power of testimony.

Up to the time when the Revelation was given, the Gentile Churches had continued to hold their separate place of united testimony. They were still separate from the world; were still united one with the other; were still shining as lights in the darkness. Each Church that had been anywhere gathered throughout the earth was deemed worthy of being represented before God by "a candlestick of gold"; and seeing that they had a collective brightness too (for the catholic unity of the one body was as yet unbroken) that collective brightness was fitly represented by seven* candlesticks shining together. In their several localities each Church separately shone; but they had also unity one with

* "Seven" is here used as the number that symbolizes *completeness*. These Churches therefore, selected by the Lord in order to afford a *complete* representation of the practical condition of Gentile Christianity at *that* time, are to be regarded as representing *all* Gentile Christianity—Gentile Christianity, *as it then was*, in the aggregate; when it possessed *local* unity and *catholic* unity too. The first was symbolized by each of the candlesticks regarded individually; the second by all the seven collectively. At Ephesus for example, all the saints who dwelt in that city were gathered into visible communion with each other. All light was with them; everything else in Ephesus was darkness; and therefore *one* candlestick fitly represented their condition. There was one point of concentrated light. But what each Church was in its own locality, that all the Churches unitedly were to the world around them. They were together separated; had a common calling and service; were alike one to the other; were ordered and nourished by the same hand. This was *catholic* unity, symbolized by the seven candlesticks standing together with the Lord in their midst. The proper unity of the Church is gone if either of these be wanting.

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the other: they spake the same things, they walked in the same paths; and therefore their light, as it shone on the world around them, shone in the power of collective brightness. That brightness indeed was beginning to wane; in some of the Churches the light was becoming very dim; nevertheless as yet their honoured place of united testimony was not forfeited: they could still be represented by candlesticks of gold before God—a symbol which He had Himself appointed to express His sense of their high calling in the earth.

To one, like John, instructed in the Scriptures, a candlestick of gold was a well-known symbol. A candlestick of gold had stood in the inner court of the Temple (that court which represented "heavenly places not made with hands," Heb. ix.), and had there typified that which the redeemed shall finally be, when, in union with their risen Lord, they shall for ever shine in the sanctuary of God. The prophet Zechariah, too, when taught in vision respecting the millennial glory of Israel in the earth, was shown "a candlestick all of gold"—a symbol of that which Israel will be when they shall manifestly become the light of all nations. But what Israel will be, that, *as to light*, Churches gathered from among the despised Gentiles already were. They were *already* candlesticks of gold. Forestalling, as to this, the blessing of millennial Israel, they were already shining in the power of that heavenly light, which, if it had been sustained, would have met and mingled

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with the brightness of the millennial day. That future hour, indeed, when it shall at last be said to Israel, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come," circumstantially differs widely from this present hour of darkness, for the Truth will no longer then be found in suffering and reproach—the time of its triumph will have come. Its light shall then no longer struggle with darkness that comprehends it not; but set in a sphere of kindred purity, it shall go forth in its brightness and prevail—"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Yet, although the light with which Israel will lighten the earth in that future day may be in brightness more excellent, and be more abiding (for it will never wane nor be scattered, as it has waned and been scattered in this our dispensation of failure), yet these are but *circumstantial* differences; they affect not the essential excellency of that light, which is the *same* light, whether it shine in the midst of the brightness of the millennial day, or in the darkness of this present hour of evil; whether it shine to be maintained in its purity and lustre, or to be marred by unfaithfulness and failure. The same kind of symbol, therefore, which denotes the place of millennial Israel is here applied to the Churches gathered from the Gentiles. Not, indeed, that they were so estimated in the judgment of man: they were not regarded in the earth as candlesticks

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of gold; it was only the expression of their value as estimated before God.

John had been conversant with the Churches as to their practical circumstances in the earth. He had been with them as their "brother and fellow-partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and patience in Jesus." He had laboured among them and watched over them, as one who had learned from the great Shepherd to love and care for the sheep. But now, removed for a season from the practical sphere of thought and action, he was taken as into a heavenly sanctuary, where the Churches which he had known on earth were symbolically represented by seven candlesticks of gold. He was not taken in vision to the seven cities in which the Churches locally were, there to see a separate candlestick in each city: but the golden candlesticks were seen *together*; not in the several cities, but in a hidden and heavenly sanctuary—a symbolic Holy Place. There they stood, as representatives of that which was external and distant, the value and excellency of which they were intended to express as that value was estimated before God. The Lord, the candlesticks, and the stars were seen out of earthly connexion; but that which the candlesticks and the stars denoted, namely, the Churches and their ministry, was found amidst the scenes of earth external to that symbolic sanctuary.

It was the part of the Churches to discern and to value their high calling, and to seek to maintain

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themselves in practical correspondency with their heavenly pattern. They were set to shine with the light of God in a dark world which Satan ruled; and though the place of their service and testimony might locally vary, yet their light was one; it was kindled from the same source; it belonged to the same sanctuary. They were together the pillar and ground of God's heavenly Truth; and the maintenance of that Truth among men was made mainly dependent on the faithfulness of their testimony. Unity had been given them. Although locally separate they were practically one. He who walked in their midst, holding, as He himself said, the stars in His right hand, was the unseen centre of their union; and another bond was supplied by the presence of those who, like Timothy and Titus and St. Paul whilst they yet lived, remained unlocalized, "having no certain dwelling place," and exercised a general authoritative superintendence over all the Churches; whereby a practical bond of union (invisible perhaps to the world, but cognizable by those who had the eye of faith) was drawn around all who were gathered in the name of Christ.* The calling

* The ministerial relation which Timothy, Titus, and others who laboured with and under St. Paul, held to the Churches was different from that of those who, as elders or bishops (for elder and bishop were different names of the same office) exercised a stationary oversight over the various Churches in their several localities. The elders or bishops were always localized; the specific sphere of their pastoral rule being the Church with which they themselves were locally connected. Thus, the Churches at Philippi and at Ephesus had each their own localized elders. But the ministry of Timothy,

of the Churches was, no doubt, high and difficult; but it was not too difficult for Christ to have sustained them in, for Almighty power was in His hand —power ready to become the servant of their need. He was able to minister all needful strength; and He would have ministered it if only there had been found in them the ear to hear.

In this vision He is seen walking in His sanctuary, in the midst of the golden candlesticks, as one acquainted with the state in which the Churches, thus symbolized, practically were, and prepared to pronounce on their condition. It was His place to determine (and He had determined) whether they were proving themselves worthy of their high calling. He was there to declare His sentence; willing, indeed, to admonish and to correct, and to supply the needful grace, wherever His correction was heeded; but prepared also, if faithfulness to God and to the Truth should require it, to remove them from their place of honour, if they proved unfit to be represented in His sanctuary by candlesticks of gold.

Titus, &c., was not localized. Theirs was a *circulating* ministry extending over all the Churches; and by them elders were appointed. (See Titus i. 5.) If false doctrines threatened to come in at Ephesus, Timothy was to stay there and check it. (See 1 Tim. i. 3.) If evil appeared in Crete, Titus was desired by the Apostle to remain there and restrain it. (See Titus i. 11.) The ministry, therefore, that they exercised was of a special kind. It had an authority that was peculiar to itself, and drew around all the Churches a practical bond of union which prevented their being independent one of the other.

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Few things are more important than to remember this relation of our Lord to His Churches here. We speak of Him as planting the Churches, and as cherishing and preserving them by His shepherd care; but we often forget that He must also, in faithfulness to God, examine that which has been set in the earth to bear the name and maintain the principles of God. He can be patient and pitiful, but He cannot own any thing as being what really it is not, for then He would Himself cease to be "the faithful and true witness."

It was one of the functions of the priests of Israel to put a difference between clean and unclean, and to judge between holy and unholy. Discriminative judgment was, therefore, a part of the priestly office, and it is in the exercise of such discrimination that the Lord Jesus is, in this vision, seen. There was no diadem upon His head (for He was not now come to rule the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords), but "His head and His hair were white, as white wool, as snow," like the head of "the Ancient of days," as one who had seen the course of everlasting ages, well suited, therefore, calmly and wisely to discriminate and to judge—"With the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days is understanding; with him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding" (Job xii. 12)—suited qualifications for One who had come to pronounce on the condition of His Churches. "His eyes were as a flame of fire"—able, therefore, according to the

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searching power of divine holiness, to prove and examine all things. "His feet were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace"—unsusceptible, therefore, of corruption or taint, even though obliged to tread amidst that which is defiled or defiling. "His voice was as the voice of many waters"—one of the characteristics of the *Almighty* God of Israel which will be manifested when He shall return to take possession of Jerusalem His city and of Israel His people. (See Ezek. xliii. 1, 2.) "Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword;" for the word of destroying judgment, as well as of grace, can issue from His lips. Thus He was about to fight against those who were defiling His Churches. (See Rev. ii. 16.) Thus, too, He will finally smite the earth, and destroy the Wicked one. (See Is. xi., and Rev. xix.) "His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength"—the source of light and warmth and vivifying power to those on whom it rests for blessing; but leaving in darkness and misery and death all those from whom it is turned away. The ministry also of the Churches (whether to give or to withhold) was entirely subject to His control; for He held the stars in His right hand. Such were the attributes of His divine person. He whom Israel had rejected was thus known by the Churches as living and acting towards *them* in the power of these attributes of the God of Israel. His vestment also was equally expressive of divine and heavenly character; it was

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a robe reaching to the feet (ποδήρης, probably the priestly robe of the ephod), "girded with a girdle of gold."*

It was with these characteristics, all of them distinctively heavenly and divine, that He came to pronounce on the condition of His Churches. He could use, as regarded the *facts* of their condition, no untrue standard: those facts must be pronounced on, as being what they really were; although, after they were determined, He could exercise all fulness of grace towards the *persons*. The great question was, whether the Churches were, or were not, preserving the place in which He had set them — whether they were still worthy of being represented by candlesticks of gold. There was no *necessary* discrepancy between them and His holy standard; He would not require impossibilities — "His yoke is easy"; if anything needed to be remedied, He could remedy; if anything needed to be given, He could give. His visitation, although judicial, was priestly. It was the judgment of enquiry for rectification; not the judgment of condemnation for destruction.

* Gold was the metal used in the Holy and Most Holy courts of the Tabernacle to typify the nature and offices of Christ, as known and estimated *in heaven*. "Girded with a girdle of gold" is, therefore, an expressive indication of one who comes forth in the full power of heavenly excellency, to act according to that excellency. If, as is commonly supposed, the garment reaching to the feet (ποδήρης) is the same as the *blue* robe of the ephod (see the lxx. of Ex. xxviii. 4, and Ex. xxix. 5), that also would be equally expressive of heavenly excellency, as well as of priestly office, blue being the heavenly colour.

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Grace follows, or, as it were, walks by the side of, judgment such as this: only, there must be confession and submission. He could give space to repent. He could supply "gold tried in the fire," or give "eye-salve that they might see": but He required obedient attention to His word. "He that hath an ear let him hear."

We are now so accustomed to think of the Church (I mean the true Church of God), in its present condition of disruption, and to see it in its amalgamation with the world, that we find it difficult even to conceive in thought what once it was, when it was really one, and stood forth before men in living practical testimony to the same Truth. Whilst the Apostles yet lived, their authority so effectually maintained the *executive* agency of the Churches in a condition to repress and control evil, that the corporate testimony of the whole Christian body was sustained in its integrity. There was real catholic unity, and that in the Truth. The condition of the early Churches was not one in which no evil was present (on the contrary, evil was sometimes strong and threatening, as the epistles to the Churches in Corinth and Galatia testify), but the evil was met —so promptly and efficiently met, by godly discipline enforced by the Apostles, or by those who, like Timothy and Titus, laboured with them, that the Churches still remained "epistles of Christ," practically reflecting His mind, and preserving a unity that the world recognised as real. The doctrine and

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the practice of the Church was then, not in name but in truth, apostolic. As a body it was avowedly separate, not merely from the grosser forms of the world's evil, but from the systems of the world *as such*. The authority of Cæsar's courts it sought not; and false ecclesiastical authority in a corporate form, pretending to the sanction of the name of Christ, was as yet unknown. Their ministry was supplied, not by human contrivances, but by Christ. Truth was not esteemed a vague uncertain thing, unknown and undiscoverable: it was seen in its comprehensiveness, seen as something definite and fixed; and they who saw it, loved it—loved it because it was *of* God and led *to* God, and, therefore, as knowing its preciousness, they longed and they laboured to impart it to others. Such was the early love of the Churches of Christ. While it continued they shone as lights of the world, and were worthy of being represented by "candlesticks of gold."

But it was only for a moment that the light of Gentile Christianity thus shone. It was fast waning when the Lord thus appeared to John in Patmos. Even the Church at Ephesus, that Church over which St. Paul had so anxiously watched—that Church whose "works and labour and patience" the Lord Himself praised, had lost its first love. Wearied, probably, by struggling against the tide that ran so strongly against the Truth of Christ; finding failure where they had expected strength, and barrenness where they had hoped for fruitfulness;

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seeing weakness in others, and discovering it in themselves, they had flagged, and lost their first energy and zeal. When iniquity abounds, love towards the service and Truth of Christ soon waxes cold, even in Christ's own people. They forget the value that Truth in itself has, apart from the condition of its servants, and apart from its successes. Their apprehensions, too, of grace, under such circumstances, are apt to become weakened. Insensibly making their own practical condition the ground of their hope towards God, they forget that they are loved, and washed from their sins, and made priests and kings unto God, apart from their own service, its successes or its failures. Energy, under such circumstances, soon decays, and, as a consequence, testimony fails; and when the light of testimony dwindles, one essential characteristic of the "candlestick" condition ceases. In some of the Churches, such as those at Sardis and Laodicea, evil had assumed a more positive form of development; and now John was commissioned to address them all for the last time in their corporate and collective standing. The warnings were sent, but they were unheeded; even the Churches that were most vigorous, declined. The threatened infliction came; and the "candlestick" condition of the Gentile Churches for ever ceased.

In saying this, it is not meant that Christianity no longer existed in those places, or that Christians ceased to be gathered there, and that, in a corporate

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form.* The hour when the Lord finally pronounced the Churches unworthy of being represented before God by candlesticks of gold, was one known only to Himself. In the earth, it would be discovered gradually, by its consequences. The Churches would for a time meet, and apparently act and worship as before; but the strengthening and preserving care of Christ being withdrawn, and the power of the enemy allowed to come in, effects would soon be manifest, which all who had the eye of faith (except indeed that eye had become dim through unfaithfulness) would readily recognise. "The poor of the flock" (said the prophet, speaking of a remnant in Israel similarly circumstanced)—"the poor of the flock *who waited upon me*, knew that it was the word of the Lord." There were, however,

* When the Lord said to the Church at Ephesus, "I will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent," these words have been thought by some to refer to the removal of Christianity out of Ephesus. But the Lord is not threatening the city of Ephesus. He does not say to Pagan Ephesus, "I will remove thy candlestick," as if the Church was *its* candlestick; nor does He say to the Church in Ephesus, "I will remove thee out of Ephesus"; but He says to the Church in Ephesus, "I will remove thy candlestick from its place among the seven, where it is now standing in my secret sanctuary." Consequently as to numbers, and individual names, the Church at Ephesus might have continued just what it was, and yet its candlestick have been removed. After this threatening, true Christianity did continue in Ephesus for a long period; but in a state of such declension, that unless we say that Christ was untrue to the word of His message, and that He did not remove the candlestick, we must admit that the extinction of Christianity in a city, and the loss of Church-standing by Christians in that city, are very different and distinguishable things.

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but few such. The majority, boasting themselves in evil, and speaking great swelling words respecting Church authority and the like, and finding in the withdrawal of Christ's present power freer scope for their own evil energies, went on to pervert and prostitute His principles, and to construct the fabric of their greatness out of the ruins of His Truth. Unless the corporate forms of Christianity, such as they have been seen in the East and in the West during the last 1800 years, are to be defended, we must admit these things.

What wonder, therefore, when the corporate testimony of the true Church ceased, and when the corporate testimony of false Christianity became the ally of the world's worst energies, that Satan should have prospered in advancing his evil plans among the nations? Nothing has been a more potent instrument than false Christianity, in helping on the nations to the present point of their progress; and what is yet before them, the Revelation declares. It speaks of deep and wide apostasy, the like to which has never yet been; yet vast and extensive as that apostasy may be, there shall be even then a remnant who shall overcome "because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony, and who shall not love their lives unto death." (See Rev. xii.) We may be very sure that the testimony of this Book, which, in more quiet seasons of the Church's history, has been sometimes hidden, sometimes perverted, will be valued and maintained in its

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integrity, by those who shall testify in that closing day of evil. We may hope, too, that the attention that is now being re-directed towards the prophecies of this Book, may tend to the sowing of some seed that shall produce its harvest in that day of the Church's last conflict with the power of evil.

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CHAPTER II.

"Seven Candlesticks of Gold."*

I AM unwilling to quit these words without considering somewhat further the instruction they convey respecting the primitive order of the Gentile Churches. If we have inconsiderately assumed that the Scriptures are on this subject silent—if we have imagined that the question of Church order is one undetermined by God, and left to be decided according to our own judgment, on mere principles of expediency; these words, so few and simple, may be sufficient to convince us of our mistake. It is true, indeed, that the position once occupied by the Gentile Churches is irrevocably lost. Local unity is gone; Catholic unity is gone. Nevertheless, this will not render a regard to the past useless. There is always a value in honest retrospect: and at the present moment there are, perhaps, few things more

* Those who may not feel interested in this subject, and who desire to consider the Revelation in its prophetic parts only, may pass on to the next chapter.

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practically important to individual Christians than that they should remember whence Gentile Christianity has fallen. They may thus learn to avoid things that are inconsistent with their primitive position, even though they know that they will never recover it again; and they will be able to detect the false claims to that position, and to the authority connected therewith, which have ever fearfully abounded in the professing Church.

When the Lord Jesus was personally on earth, the Church was not yet ordered, according to the form which He intended it to assume among men. He was engaged in collecting, rather than in arranging, the materials for His spiritual house; in preparing the living stones, not in building them together. Accordingly, all who were thus gathered, were quickened with new and heavenly life, and were brought into living and everlasting union with Him who was "the Life"—Life that was with the Father, heavenly and divine: nevertheless, although thus made "living stones," they were not until after the resurrection and ascension of the Lord, ordered, or, to use the words of the Apostle, "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

But on the day of Pentecost the Church, brought into the intelligent apprehension of the blessings with which it was endowed in Christ risen, and enabled, through the Spirit, to act in the power thereof, was constituted as a visible body on the earth. It was thus constituted at Jerusalem, and was, like the

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Gentile Churches afterward, heavenly in its standing, its hopes, its laws.* Its hopes were heavenly, for the Lord had said unto them, "In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you." Its standing was heavenly; for they had been quickened together with Christ and raised up together, and made "to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Its laws were heavenly, for they were those of the Sermon on the mount. Their practice was heavenly—indeed, far more heavenly than that of the Gentile Churches afterward, for even the privileged Levite sold his land; neither said any that ought he possessed was his own. They had received also the Spirit sent down from heaven—the earnest of their future glory, and the witness of their adoption as children of the Father. In these things, therefore, there is an essential resemblance among all the Churches of God. But since the Church at Jerusalem was intended for a season to be the centre of light and control to other Churches, its order was peculiar, being one of singular dignity, pertaining to the Church at Jerusalem alone.

* It may seem strange that it should be needful to dwell on a truth so self-evident, as that the Pentecostal Church, and the Apostles, "full of the Holy Ghost and of power," were heavenly in their hopes, &c.—in a word, that they had all the full distinctive blessings of Christianity. Yet of late an ingenious but *most false and dangerous* system has been invented by some, by which all these things and others, no less important, are denied, and the Pentecostal Church been supposed to be earthly and Jewish in its standing and its hopes.

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This order was what has since been called metropolitan. The Church at Jerusalem, like a sun in the centre of its system, had other Churches, like so many planets, revolving around it. It was strictly a mother and a ruling Church; and, therefore, when the Church at Antioch was in difficulty, it sends to Jerusalem for direction, and receives an authoritative reply, "It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us." This then was a relation that could not be fitly symbolized by two separate candlesticks, equal and alike: *one* candlestick with many branches and many lamps would have been a more appropriate emblem; and such *is* the character of the symbol employed to represent Jerusalem, when she shall nationally assume her metropolitan position in the millennial earth. To her alone that position belongs, and for her it is reserved by God.*

But when Jerusalem had rejected the testimony of the Church, St. Paul was raised up to carry the truth among the Gentiles. He preached the same Gospel; but a new order was established among the Churches which he gathered. This order was not metropolitan. Seven Gentile Churches are represented by *seven* candlesticks of gold, all equal, all alike; belonging, indeed, to one and the same sanctuary, but connected by no such visible bond as

* See Zech. iv. 2. "And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, &c., &c." Such is the symbol of the millennial position of Jerusalem.

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revolution around a common metropolitan centre would have supplied. They were in that sense independent one of the other; but not independent of Him who invisibly walked among them, and who was able to preserve that likeness to Himself and to one another which His grace had given them; to keep them what He had made them, alike in faith, manners and testimony. To this end He had given them the same truth and the same Spirit, and had also provided them with a superintending unlocalized ministry (such as I have above described) whereby a practical bond of union was drawn around all the Churches. It was, indeed, in one sense, an invisible bond; for men would not recognise in the ministry of a few strangers who had "no certain dwelling place," the authority connected with a constituted body set avowedly in metropolitan position;* nevertheless the unity that hence resulted was not invisible. Christians, as they journeyed from Ephesus to Thyatira, found at Thyatira what they had left at Ephesus; and moreover the world was conscious that it was so. They knew that in the several Gentile cities there were those gathered who in faith and doctrine and manners were emphatically one. The whole of the Gentile Churches, although locally

* Such was the light in which Timothy, Titus, and St. Paul himself must have been regarded in the Gentile cities. They were regarded as wandering strangers seeking to introduce for their own purposes, new things. "Some said, What doth this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods." Such was the estimate formed of St. Paul at Athens.

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separate, together constituted one body, alike in every essential characteristic, and as such were known and recognised among men.

The thought of one candlestick only being found in each of the cities in which Christians were gathered together, will probably be regarded by some as a strange, and perhaps questionable, notion. The views entertained by many require that there should have been *several* candlesticks for each city. They think that Christians may be rightly gathered around their respective points of difference; that they may worship separately, teach separately, act separately, and yet claim the unity once possessed by the Churches of God. Not a few vindicate the present divisions of Christianity as not inconsistent with the mind of God, and say that they are appointed by Him to afford an opportunity for the exercise of forbearance and charity. But is this what we learn from the Revelation? We there find *one* candlestick representing the gathered saints of one city; and *seven* candlesticks standing side by side in one sanctuary, representing the catholic unity of all the Churches. This is the only standard by which Gentile Christianity is at liberty to test its condition. That Christianity among the Gentiles has long since ceased to answer to this pattern is plain; but it makes no little difference in the sight of God, whether we assign as the reason for the want of correspondency, that no fixed pattern has been given, and that there has been no failure; or whether we

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are willing to confess that there *is* variation from the standard once appointed, and that the cause of that variation is our own evil. To neglect the pattern that God has given is in itself a sin; but it is a sin that may be aggravated by a vain attempt at extenuation. It is very plain that our not being "perfectly joined together in unity of mind and of judgment" incapacitates us for concurrent action; for we cannot *act* together if our doctrines be different and our principles various. We must needs remain, in that case, more or less in separation from (it may be in opposition to) each other. Such separation may be *necessary*, for we must not compromise the Truth for the sake of apparent union; but is it a necessity to be gloried in, or to be deplored? Shall we quietly acquiesce in it? or shall we do all that in us lies towards the rectification of such a condition, by seeking after Truth *and union in it?*

The false pretensions of the Church of Rome have, no doubt, rendered the thought of visible unity distasteful to many minds and caused them to suspect it, as if it were a notion necessarily connected with evil. But it is not necessary to reject the visible unity of which the Scriptures speak, because the wickedness of Rome has falsely ascribed that unity to herself. We may separate the precious from the vile, and reject the evil, without at the same time casting away the good. Indeed it is so plain that the early Churches, as described in Scrip-

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ture, were visibly one, that we are bound by every principle of reason and truth, either to show that we have such unity, or else to account for its absence. That we have it not is too plain to need a proof; the accounting for its absence may involve a humbling confession of past sin and present weakness, which we would gladly be spared the necessity of making; but such confession is the place of truth, and truthful confession is a means to the blessing of God. The present reaction against the truths of Protestantism in this country is doubtless a judgment from the hand of God: but it may partly be accounted for by our having so neglected what the Scripture has said respecting the proper unity of the Church of God; whereby a weapon from His armoury has been abandoned to the almost exclusive use of the enemies of His Truth.

The Church of Rome and every other body which has sought to occupy a place of centralized authority, have, as might be expected, all scorned to imitate the lowly order of the Gentile Churches, and have all assumed the dignity of metropolitan position. Whether it be a pontiff or a patriarch surrounded by his priestly counsellors, or a king surrounded by his convocation, or an assembly of ruling delegates—in either case, a place of centralized authority is assumed. An effort is thus made to govern other (so called) Churches, just as the Apostolic Church in Jerusalem governed the Church at Antioch; and the order which God assigned to the Gentile

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Churches is despised. Now if this had been done by those who were really Christ's, He would never have sanctioned the presumptuous sin: but when we remember what the Church of Rome and other ruling Churches have, for the most part, been, we may well tremble; for they have walked, as it were, hand in hand with the world, sanctioning its plans and stimulating its energies, during the darkest and most ungodly periods of its course, as the history of all Christendom too plainly testifies.

We, indeed, at the present hour, have not to do with the *primary* occupancy of this position; we find it already occupied. Others have placed themselves there; we may, or we may not, recognise their claim. By tacit acquiescence, however, we may easily connect ourselves with the evil and become partakers of other men's sins. The true Church-position is a high and holy place; and if it behoves us to beware of false Christs and false prophets, it no less concerns us to repudiate the pretensions of any body which falsely claims the reverence and regard due to a Church of God.

A test by which all pretensions to Church position may be tried is found in the message of the Lord to the Church at Ephesus. That Church was faultless in all its developed ways. It was chargeable with no worldliness nor with any corruption. Its labours were abundant and they were praised—"For my name's sake thou hast laboured and hast not fainted"; yet it had declined as to the energy of its

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first love, and for this only it was to lose the standing of a Church of God, unless it should quickly repent. Such is the strict and holy test which Christ must apply. We may, if we please, refuse to acquiesce in His sentence. He may remove the candlestick; and men may presumptuously pretend to raise up another, and may speak loftily about ordination, successional order, and the like: but the Lord will laugh at it, for He seeth that its day is coming.

I scarcely need say that it is idle, and indeed sinful, to pretend to a Church-standing when unity has ceased to exist; for it is neither found locally nor generally. Individual saints and companies of saints do indeed remain, and will remain until the Lord Jesus shall return: but as to unity—the proper and once realised unity of the Gentile Churches, it is gone, and gone for ever. The Reformation, blessed as it was in restoring (at least nominally) the recognition of the paramount authority of the Holy Scripture, and in reviving the doctrine of salvation "by grace through faith," yet neither did, nor could, restore "the candlesticks of gold." It did not even restore local, much less catholic, unity. Indeed, it rather commenced a period when division has multiplied on division. In many cases the false ecclesiastical headship of Rome was exchanged for the equally false headship of the secular power; nor has there appeared any body that could bear the holy scrutiny of Him who once "walked among the

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golden candlesticks," or answer to the test which He applied to the Church in Ephesus. Indeed, truth constrains us to confess that the history of Protestantism has manifested features of deadly evil, as dark and as determined as that of Popery itself.* Gentile Christianity no longer answers to its pattern, and consequently the messages of the Lord to the Churches can be by us only indirectly used. He that hath an ear may still hear what the Spirit once said unto the Churches: but we cannot hear it as holding the place which the Churches in the Revelation held. The unity, the power, the order are gone. The Church is no longer seen collectively as the pillar and ground of the Truth. The saints of God are a scattered and divided remnant; whilst their adversaries are lively and strong.

Yet, however much there may be in the aspect of the present hour many things that might discourage, we have, nevertheless, the consolation of knowing that there shall be, even at the very moment when Antichristian blasphemy shall be at its height, some who shall be rejoiced over, even in heaven, as honoured testifiers to Jesus in the midst of that darkest hour of evil. We are taught also to expect that there shall be some, who, as wise servants over households, shall be found distributing to each their portion of meat in due season—preaching to the world the Gospel of Grace, and nourishing the saints

* The neology of Germany; the Socinianism and Infidelity of Switzerland; the condition of the United States also, are proofs.

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by food convenient for them, even up to the very moment of the Lord's return. "Who, then, is that faithful and wise servant whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." (Matt. xxiv.) By these means some union, and that in the Truth (which, indeed, is the only union that can answer the purposes of God), shall be secured. If we have grace and wisdom so to unite as to maintain the testimonies of the Scripture, and to declare what is there written, our union will not be without *some* results of blessing. Sanctifying effects ever follow the reception of Truth. But if we meet to speak our own thoughts—and if pastors and teachers competent to edify according to the Scripture, be withheld; or if, when given, they be despised, nothing can be expected then but confusion and sorrow.*

* There are few texts which it is more needful to consider at the present moment than Eph. iv. 11; "And he gave some, apostles; some, prophets; some, evangelists; some, pastors and teachers, for (*πρός*—with reference to) the perfecting of the saints unto (*εἰς*) the the work of ministration, unto (*εἰς*) the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all come, &c." From this passage we learn—first, that the body of Christ will not be edified unless the saints, individually, in their own private spheres, are energetic and bear healthfully on each other; secondly, that in order to this, pastors and teachers, and the due ministry of the Word through such, is needful: otherwise the saints individually will not be prepared to aid each other, and will not while they love one another, remember also the interests of the Truth—*ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ*. Few in the Church of God are called to the "ministry of the word," but all

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We must, however, carefully remember that the most perfect union now possible, would, if we could attain it, be something very different from that union which once flowed from the unity of the unfallen Churches. The remnant who followed Moses when the rest of Israel were gathered around the calf; or the remnant who, with Elijah, had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal; or even the more happy remnant around Haggai or Nehemiah, who were privileged in some feeble measure to recover and manifest the lost principles of Israel's worship and of Israel's order;—would have sinned if they had thought or spoken of themselves as Israel once did, when triumphing at the Red Sea, or rejoicing under Solomon. A time of apostasy is generally a time of pride, and it is no little blessing to be preserved from the high words and exaggerated pretensions of the present hour—to be preserved from those who speak of being what the unfallen Church once was; and from those also, who mistake civilization for Christianity, and bless in the name of Christ the very things that are leading to Antichrist. And although, as I have already said, the indirect application of the addresses to the Churches is all that now remains to us, yet that application will be found to involve most precious instruction to all who remember that no change of circumstances can ever deprive us of

believers are called to some act of "ministration" one to the other —it may be merely in giving the cup of cold water, or speaking the word of kindness or consolation.

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our right to obey God; and His commandment still is that we should never cease from separating the precious from the vile, and from seeking "to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad"; but this is something very different from pretending to the place of "the seven candlesticks of gold," or to the Pentecostal standing of the Church in Jerusalem. A knowledge of this difference is essential to a right understanding of the Revelation; for its testimony is, in great part, the consequence of the lapse of Christianity; and we can have little perception of what that fall really is if we imagine that anything yet remains in earth that answers to the symbol of "the candlesticks of gold."

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CHAPTER III.

Notes on Revelation I.

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants the things which must come to pass speedily; and which, having sent by his angel, he signified unto his servant John; who hath testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ—what things soever he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things which are written therein; for the time is at hand."

The Revelation of Jesus Christ.] These words mean either the Revelation *possessed by* the Lord Jesus, or, the Revelation *communicated by* Him. It was He who received this Book from the throne; He also opened its seals. In either of these senses, therefore, the Revelation is *His*.

That these words cannot refer (as some have supposed) to the *personal* revelation of the Lord in glory, is evident from the words which follow, viz.: "which God gave unto him, to shew unto his ser-

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vants the things that must come to pass, &c." Such words would be totally inapplicable to the revelation of the Lord in glory.

Nor is the personal revelation of the Lord the distinctive subject of this Book. His personal manifestation is not described until the end of the *nineteenth* chapter. The nations will be visited by terrible chastisements first, *from the hand of God, before* His Son is sent to inflict the final blow; just as the plagues on Egypt, which admitted of repentance, *preceded* the finally destroying judgment at the Red Sea, which admitted of *no* repentance. It is to these preceding chastisements that the visions of wrath in the Revelation refer, until the *nineteenth* chapter; so that its *special* subject is not the personal manifestation of the Lord Jesus, but events which precede and usher in that manifestation.

Indeed, in reading the Revelation, few things are more important than to remember that all its descriptions of inflicted judgment until the nineteenth chapter belong, not to the *next*, but to the *present* dispensation. When the Lord Jesus returned to the Father, after having been rejected on the earth, Jehovah said unto Him, "Sit thou at my right hand, until *I* shall have set thy foes a footstool for thy feet."* This remarkable verse, quoted more frequently than any other in the New Testament

* Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου.—See Appendix.

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(because so peculiarly characteristic of the dispensation to which the New Testament belongs), describes the Lord Jesus as seated for a season on the throne of Jehovah, *waiting*: and speaks of the power of that throne as acting on His behalf—Jehovah's throne acting for Christ. As regards the earth and its condition there is no characteristic of the present period more essentially distinctive than this; none which stands more decidedly in contrast with the period when Christ will assume the authority of His own peculiar kingdom. As soon as this verse ceases to apply—that is, whenever the Lord Jesus quits His present place on the throne of the Father—the present dispensation ends and the new age begins.

It is true indeed that Christ (for He is God, and one with the Father) is able to exercise, and does exercise, all the power of the throne on which He is now called to sit. It was His before He was incarnate, for "all things were created by Him," and "all things upheld by the word of His power"; and now He is "the Lamb having seven horns and seven eyes," *i.e.*, He has all plenitude of power and almighty control; even as He himself said, "*All* power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." But the power of the throne of God which He thus exercises, is carefully to be distinguished from the authority which, as soon as the appointed hour comes, He will receive from that throne, as the minister thereof; and which He will exercise, sitting on *His own throne*

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and on the throne of His father David. Authority now *delegated* by the throne of God itself, will then be resumed : and with it Christ will be invested.

The nature of the power which Christ will formally assume when brought before the Ancient of days (see Dan. vii.), is that kingly government of nations which, when taken from Israel and the throne of David, because of their sin, God *delegated* to the king of Babylon and to the Empires that were appointed to succeed him, till the time for the forgiveness of Israel should come. This power, as described in Psalm lxxii., Christ inherits as the true Solomon, Heir to the throne of David. At the same time also He will be manifested in that glory which pertains to Him as "Son of man," all creation being put in subjection under Him in the title of that name. (See Ps. viii.)

As yet Christ is still seated on the throne of the Father, "*waiting*." It has not yet been said unto Him, "Rule thou in the midst of thy enemies." The footstool has not yet been formed, that He might go forth and plant His foot in wrath upon it. But everything is tending thereunto. As regards the Roman nations and the unrepentant in Israel, the preparation of the footstool is the end to which all the superintending power of the throne is directed. "This is the purpose that is purposed on the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations." (Is. xiv.) As soon as it is prepared, and the great gathering at Armageddon shall

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have taken place, Christ will quit the throne of the majesty in the heavens, and will return in glory.

The book of Revelation therefore, until the nineteenth chapter, does not belong to that future period when Christ comes forth in the power of His own peculiar kingdom: on the contrary, it belongs to the present dispensation of suffering, during which Christ is seated at the right hand of God, exercising the power of the Father's throne, but not seated as yet on His own throne. It treats of events which precede the mission of Christ and "the setting of the footstool." It leads on indeed to the period when Christ is revealed in His glory, but this, as I have already said, is not *described* until the nineteenth chapter. It forms the conclusion, not the subject of the Book. Christ hidden with God—Israel blinded—the nations of the Roman world supreme and glorious—the Church scattered and suffering—these are the characteristics of this present dispensation, and they are the characteristics of the period of which the Revelation treats. The neglect of this distinction would introduce hopeless perplexity into the interpretation of this Book.

Which God gave unto him.] These words show how peculiarly this Book is to be regarded as coming from God *as God*. It is not the instruction of the Father to His children, viewed as children in the bosom of the family; but it is God on the throne of His government, instructing the servants of Jesus. Although John had been so peculiarly conversant

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with those truths respecting the Father and the Son which his gospel and epistles unfold, yet in this vision he is evidently himself brought into strange and hitherto unknown circumstances. He felt as a creature before God.

It is important to observe how continually the name "Jesus" is used throughout this Book. No Jewish confession of Messiah as about to come —nothing, in short, but the Spirit, as the promised Comforter, giving communion with the Father and the Son—would entitle any to be regarded as "*servants of Jesus.*" "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to declare these things *in the Churches.*" They consequently, not Jews, are the persons commanded to keep the sayings of the prophecy of this Book. John represents those who are regarded as the servants of Jesus throughout this Book; and was not John one of the Church of God? How strange that this should be doubted by any!

To show unto his servants.] Some have ventured to affirm that the Revelation is not addressed to us, because it is addressed to the "servants of Jesus," and we (say they) are not *servants* but *sons.* But is sonship inconsistent with servantship? If it were, the eternal and only begotten Son of God could never have become a servant. Yet does not God call Him "my righteous servant" (Is. liii.), and again, "Behold my servant whom I uphold"? (Is. xlii.) "Does not the Apostle Paul also, again and again call himself "the servant of Jesus Christ"?

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Does not this very chapter speak of John as the servant of Jesus? He "signified it by his angel unto *his servant* John." And are not all who now believe in Jesus called "servants" both here and even here afterin the glory? See parable of Talents and Rev. xxii. 3.

If, in reading the Scripture, we contract the habit of neutralizing one relation by another, we shall soon make the word of God of none effect. The method of Scripture so invariably is to present the subjects of which it treats in *a variety of aspects*, that if we nullify one of these aspects by another, we shall find, not only that we learn nothing aright, but that we become destroyers of Truth. And why should we be so anxious to prove that this precious Book is not addressed to us? Is it that we wish to avoid the practical power of its instructions? Do we wish not to see the things around us in the light in which this Book sets them?

We can well understand why the children of God should be here addressed in their character of *servants*. It is only when they seek to be "soldiers of Christ" and to uphold the banner of His Truth, that they either value or are prepared to receive the instructions of this Book. Whenever they have made *themselves* merely the centre of their interests, and fixed their thoughts exclusively on their own acceptance or comfort as saints, this Book has been neglected; but whenever they have had more vigour of faith or have been forced by circumstances into

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a place of active testimony or service, they have used the Revelation. When the Church forgets what the world is, and what Satan in it is, it will not value the Revelation.

Things that must come to pass speedily.] The events here referred to begin to be described in the *sixth* chapter; for there the prophetic part of the Revelation (to speak strictly) commences. These words teach us that the time for the fulfilment of this prophecy is always to be regarded by the Church as near at hand—in the same sense as we say, "The Lord is at hand."

And he signified it, having sent by his angel, unto his servant John.] It may seem strange that one to whom the Holy Spirit had been given as the Comforter and who was moreover an Apostle, should be instructed through an angel. We find it otherwise when the knowledge communicated pertained to the family of God in respect of their own present blessings. St. Paul and St. John were not instructed through angels in feeding and ordering the Churches. But since the subject of the Revelation is *God* on the throne of His government in His relation to the nations, John, and the Church as represented by him, are placed in comparative distance. He stands as a man and a creature before God; as one redeemed indeed, but yet in felt distance from the glory of the throne. At present, the Holy Spirit does not give the power of fellowship with God in the glory of His government. The

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saints have not yet been admitted into any participation of that power which is represented by "the seven Spirits of God." That secret power of divine control, by which all things beneath are watched and ordered, is held and exercised by the Lord Jesus alone. (See Rev. v.) As to this, we have still to say, "His way is in the sea and his path is in the deep waters and his footsteps are not known." It will be otherwise when we shall "see him as he is," and "know even as we are known."

Who hath testified (that is, in this Book) *the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ—what things soever he saw.*] This may be considered the apostolic superscription of this Book. The Apostle states that all that he has written in this Book, viz., "what things soever he saw," is to be regarded as "the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ"; in other words, that it has the character and authority of other prophetic and apostolic writings. Such is the authority which the book of Revelation claims for itself.

Blessed is he that readeth.] The word "readeth," is here to be understood as denoting instruction or reading *to others*. Thus it is said to Timothy, "Till I come give attendance to reading, exhortation, &c." By this we learn that this Book should be made the subject of constant ministerial instruction in the Churches.

And they that hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things written therein.] These words strongly

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mark the practical use of the *prophetic* parts of this Book. The practical use of those parts which are *not* directly prophetic, would, of course, never be doubted. The word translated "keep," or "observe," is frequently used in this meaning, *e.g.*, "Teaching them *to observe* all things whatsoever I have commanded you." "If a man love me *he will keep* my words." The charge given *to the Churches* to observe the things written in this Book, shows that *we* are interested in the events predicted, in a sense different from that in which we are interested in some other prophecies—such, for example, as the millennial descriptions of Isaiah, which do not pertain to the present dispensation but are to be fulfilled after *we*, "the Church of the first-born," have passed into another condition of being above the heavens.

VERSES 4, 5.

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace from him who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.

These words of benediction appear peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of those to whom they were addressed. The Church was about to enter on a period that is to end in atheistic blasphemy, when the whole Roman world under Anti-

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christ, shall avowedly reject God and Christ, and say, "There is no God." As we are advancing towards this consummation, and whilst men apparently are allowed to follow out their own thoughts and to prosper, it is no little comfort to remember the unchangeableness of the everlasting God whose benediction is here pronounced upon His people.

"The seven Spirits that are before his throne" represent a peculiar agency of the Spirit of God, which He exercises in subordination to the throne; and therefore, they are said to be "before" or "in the presence of" (*ἐνώπιον*) that throne. Thus the altar in the Tabernacle is said to have been "before" God; and Aaron to minister "before" God; and Gabriel to stand "before" God; and the false prophet by-and-bye to minister "before" Antichrist.

The seven Spirits as thus seen "before" the eternal throne do not represent what the Holy Spirit is, as one with the Father and the Son; nor what He is as the Comforter, abiding with and in the saints. As God, one with the Father and the Son, He quickens; as the Comforter, He instructs and leads into all Truth; as symbolized by the seven Spirits, He watches over and controls all things, subserving the government of the almighty throne. In this character He presides over the course of all things—angels, devils, men, both wicked and good, and all the various agencies through which they operate, being under His controlling power. If,

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whilst beholding the mighty fabric of man's evil greatness arising around us, we should be tempted to feel as if all things were being allowed to take their own course; or if we should shrink from the thought of impending conflict, we are here taught to remember the seven Spirits that are "before the throne." Their power has not ceased to be supreme; they have not ceased to watch, and that for us, the course of events; and benediction from them has been pronounced over us.

He who is on the throne and the seven Spirits which are before His throne stand, as it were, apart from humanity, in a sphere of being which is simply divine. But Jesus, who is next mentioned, holds a human place as well as a divine, and is fitly mentioned last, as being in proximate relation to us; He forming that link in the chain of divine love which reaches us. His co-equality, however, with God is shown from His being mentioned as the source of benediction—"AND from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, &c."

"The faithful witness" was a name well earned by Him on earth, affording thus an example to the Churches, although an example which they have refused to follow. If they, in their lesser sphere, had been faithful witnesses, their candlesticks would not have been removed. Nevertheless as "the first-begotten of the dead," He is the pledge of the Church's final glory; for the blessings secured in Him risen are inalienable and sure. The visions of

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the saints' heavenly glory in the Revelation are founded on the fact of His being this; their title to glory depending entirely on what He has undertaken and accomplished for them. "Prince of the kings of the earth" is that which Jesus now is *in right*, and that which He will soon be manifested to be, when He shall come forth wearing the many diadems, as King of kings and Lord of lords. By remembering Christ as the "Prince of the kings of the earth," the Church has a test of the present condition of kings and nations. His return also in the right of this title is the object of their own hopes and one great subject of their testimony to others. "I, said the Apostle, testify (before God and Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead) his appearing and his kingdom."* (2 Tim. iv. 1.)

The progress of human infidelity appears to be in the reverse order to that in which the divine Persons are here presented. It begins by determinately rejecting that which is proximate to itself—that is, Jesus in the condition and character here revealed. The effort, for example, now being made in this country is to dissociate its governmental institutions, as much as possible, from the name of Jesus. Next will follow the rejection of the superintending government of God, and lastly, God will be asserted

* Διαμαρτύρομαι (ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ μέλλοντος κρίνειν ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς) καὶ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ. Such is the right reading.—See Tregelles.

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not to be. When God has been thus fully rejected, the end will come.

VERSES 5, 6.

"*Unto him that loveth us, and hath freed* (λύσαντι) *us from our sins by his own blood; and he hath made for us* (ἡμῖν) *a sovereignty—priests unto his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*" *Amen.*

Nothing perhaps is more necessary in reading the Revelation than that the soul should be established in *grace*. It reveals so much of the holiness and glory of God and of the terrors of His power—so much of the ruined condition of the Church and of the prosperity of the world's evil, that our souls require to be settled in the peace which the blood of the Lamb gives, and assured as to the unchangeableness of His love, before we can read calmly and with profit, either the visions of glory or the visions of judgment which this Book contains. Hence, the value of these words of thanksgiving and of the benediction that precedes. The very persons whose failure was about to be disclosed, and who were about to be chastened and put down from that high position of honoured service which they had been corporately holding, are yet instructed to say, "Unto him that loveth us," &c. Individually they were thus loved, though as servants of Christ, especially in their corporate character, they were to be stricken. So necessary is it to

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distinguish between blessings which are preserved for us by and in Christ, and blessings which are made dependent on our abiding in His testimonies here.

He hath made for us a sovereignty.] Such is the right reading, although "*He hath made us a kingdom*" would not be untrue. The thought conveyed however is different; in the latter case we should be spoken of as governed; whereas in the former we are spoken of as ourselves holding sovereign power. It should be observed that the sovereignty thus prepared for us is spoken of as a collective or united inheritance. The words are not "He hath made us kings" but "He hath made for us a sovereignty," whereas when our calling as priests is referred to the thought is individualised. For the use of *βασιλεία* in the sense of "sovereignty," see Rev. xi. 15—"The sovereignty of the world has become the sovereignty of our Lord and of his Christ."

The thought, however, of our being also a kingdom legislated for and governed by Christ our Lord is not in itself untrue. Many Scriptures speak of our being this *now*. Thus in Matt. xiii. we are spoken of under the emblem of wheat as forming together with intermingled tares the kingdom of the Son of man, who, it is said, when He cometh shall gather "out of his kingdom all things that offend, &c."*

* It will not be true that He will gather out of *the world*, when He returns, all things that offend, &c.: on the contrary, He will spare and convert multitudes both of the Jews and also of the

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All therefore who profess the name of Jesus, whether feignedly or truly, form at present His kingdom, which He will purify when He comes. Thus we are called a "kingdom" (Matt. xiii.), a "people" and a "nation" (λαός, ἔθνος), 1 Peter ii. 9. The Church would have proved itself this if it had carried out the laws and principles of its heavenly Master and Lord. It would then have been seen to be a peculiar kingdom in the midst of kingdoms. But in this it has entirely and thoroughly failed. Dragged down by the false professors within it, and by the earthly tendencies of real saints, it has willingly adopted the principles of the nations of earth and amalgamated itself with them, stimulating often their worst passions.

VERSE 7.

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they who pierced him, and all the tribes of the land shall mourn at him. Even so, Amen.

The three preceding verses have declared the Church's own blessing. In this verse we find one material part of their testimony to others. Having ourselves been loved and washed from our sins in His blood, we ought, throughout the whole course of this dispensation, to have looked at the world and all that is passing in it, through the medium of this

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heathen. Neither Jews nor heathen form part of His kingdom now; for they own Him not even professedly.

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solemn verse. We should not then have spoken of the gradual spread of light and truth—we should have spoken of the Lord's coming to an unprepared earth, which will *wail*—not rejoice—at His appearing. If we had remembered this verse, we never could have said that the progress of this dispensation would be progress in blessing.

When it is said, "Every eye shall see him," mankind generally, including the heathen, are to be understood; but the next clause—"they which pierced him," is more limited, and refers to those particular Gentile nations and wicked Jews who once combined against Jesus personally, and who will again combine in the last apostasy "against Jehovah and against his Christ." The languages written over the cross, which were Hebrew, Greek, Latin, sufficiently indicate the nations intended. The Roman world, in its Greek and Latin divisions, and the Jews in association therewith, during the period of their coming apostasy, form the special subject of this Book.

It is the manner of Scripture to speak of those who pierced Jesus as if alive at the hour of His return. The generation that rejected Him is considered as not having passed away. "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be done," for the present generation being made up of the same *kind* of persons, is in God's estimate the same as that which stood around the cross of Jesus. The millennial age is that which

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is first to present us with the new generation, called therefore "the generation that is to come" (Ps. cii. 18), "the people which shall be created" (Ps. cii. 18), "a people that shall be born" (Ps. xxii. 31), and similar appellations. The Church is in like manner spoken of as living on to the end. "*We* which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, &c." "I am with *you* alway, even unto the end of the age." The identity of persons is, in the estimate of God, determined by their likeness in spiritual and moral characteristics.

And all the tribes of the land shall wail at or against him.] Here, as well as in Matthew xxiv. 30, and wheresoever else "tribes" and "land" are connected, I consider the reference to be to Israel. One object of the Revelation is to show that during the whole period previous to the appearing of the Lord, Israel remains unconverted; and therefore the tribes, being unprepared to receive Him, wail. The wailing here mentioned must not be confounded with the penitential sorrow of the spared remnant spoken of in Zech. xii.

I was in the spirit on the Lord's day.] That is, not in any ordinary state even of Apostolic inspiration, but in a trance, or, like St. Paul when taken up into the third heavens—his visual and hearing powers being supernatural whilst in this condition. The first day of the week, the day of the Lord's resurrection, was fitly chosen as the period of communication, because the Church, being one with Christ, is

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regarded as belonging to the resurrection day—the day on which it is by-and-bye to know God fully, and to enter into all the secrets of His government and glory.

I may add (though it is a subject not immediately connected with that before us) that the Lord's day is one not of *rest* merely (for that the seventh day or sabbath was), but of *life*, together with rest from such toil as has been entailed on man by the fall. During the other six days we are subjected to labour and to the sweat of the brow; on the Lord's day we are free, and may live only to God.

It has been a strange mistake of some to suppose that "the Lord's day" (*κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*) here means the millennium, and that John was carried in vision into the millennium; for in the first place the millennium is not described in the Revelation until the nineteenth chapter—the Revelation in all its descriptions of earthly scenes up to that chapter being concerned with events that precede the millennium, for surely the Beast and the Harlot, and the great merchant City of the eighteenth chapter will not be found in the millennium; nor will the witnesses of God prophesy in sackcloth during the millennium. Secondly, the expression, *κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*—"Lord's day," is a different expression from, and is never to be confounded with, *ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ Κυριοῦ*, "the day of the Lord."

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CHAPTER IV.

On Revelation IV. and V.

In these two chapters, which should be read as one, we find John, for a season, altogether withdrawn from the earth and from the contemplation of everything therein. "A door was opened in heaven," and a voice said to him, "Come up hither." Every thing in the earth had become marked with ruin. Mankind at large had given themselves over to idolatry: Israel was judicially blinded: the Church in Jerusalem was scattered: the Gentile Churches were about to be chastened: and the united corporate testimony of Christianity was to cease. It was under the consciousness of these things that John was called, in vision, to enter through "the door opened in heaven"; not indeed to abide there: the time of the Church's militancy was not yet past, and John was soon commissioned to testify in the earth again—"Thou must testify again against peoples, and nations, and tongues, and many kings." (Chap. x. 11.) He was taken into heaven, not that

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he might abide there, but that he might be *instructed* there, and learn for us the resources that are in God —resources adequate to cope with all the plenitude of human evil for the vindication of His own Truth, and the establishment of the kingdom of His Son.

John had the feelings and sympathies of one who had learned to contemplate what was passing among men in the light of God and of His Truth. There is a philanthropy—a false philanthropy, which is the mere result of the misguided feelings of nature undisciplined by Truth; but there is also a philanthropy which is according to God and guided by His word; and this John possessed. He had not ceased to feel as a man, and as an Israelite, because he had become a Christian. He was not insensible either to the travail of creation "groaning in the bondage of corruption," or to the fallen condition of Israel over which Daniel, and a greater than Daniel, had wept. He knew that darkness had been judicially sent upon their hearts, and that until *that* was removed, the long-promised morning of joy—"the morning without clouds"—could not arise either on them or on the nations. He understood how the destinies of the earth were bound up with those of Israel, and that evil would continue to mark the course of human things, until Israel should "convert and be healed." His human, his Jewish, and his Christian sympathies had long been exercised on the earth; and they had cost him many a sorrow. He carried those sympathies with him into heaven;

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but there they were met with the suited comfort; there he afresh learned that God had not forgotten the earth, nor abandoned His purpose of triumphing over evil and of glorifying His people and His Truth.

John saw "and behold there was a throne set in heaven." Being "set," or firmly established, it stood in contrast with the mutability and failure of every thing he had known below. There "the foundations of all things were out of course"; all was becoming more and more like the troubled sea whose waters cannot rest: but in the throne "set" in the heavens was seen stability—stability of present superintending power—stability also of purpose, securing the accomplishment of all that is promised in ages yet to come. "And on the throne there was One who sat, like in appearance to a jasper and a sardius stone." The jasper and the sardius were stones familiar to the eye of an Israelite; for they were the first and last * of the twelve that once shone on the breast-plate of the high priest of Israel, when ministering in his garments of glory and beauty; and on them were engraved the twelve names of the tribes of Israel—names, therefore, which, so engraven, could not but shine with the self-same lustre as the stones that bore them.

The lustre of a precious stone is stedfast and

* And therefore may be considered as inclusively representing the whole series.

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abiding. Other lights may flicker or be extinguished; or their brightness may be lost in a splendour more excellent than their own. But the light of a precious stone flickers not; its power of radiancy cannot be taken away; and increase or concentration of light around it, or on it, only adds to its effulgency. It constitutes, therefore, a fitting emblem of that grace and glory, inward and outward, which will finally characterize *all* the redeemed family of God; when, perfected in the likeness of their risen Lord, they shall receive, as their united inheritance, "new heavens and a new earth" wherein righteousness shall dwell. This full consummation, indeed, will not be until after the millennial age shall have passed away, and "the dispensation of the fulness of times" shall have come: nevertheless, the hope suggested and pledged in this typical emblem will be accomplished in no little measure when "the church of the first-born," as the heavenly part of the Israel of God, shall, at the commencement of the millennial reign, inherit that heavenly city which hath for its light the glory of God and of the Lamb; and when, of the earthly Jerusalem also, it shall be said, that "her righteousness shall go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." As regards the sphere and the degree of their shining, the two Jerusalems will, indeed, greatly differ. The sphere of the one will be earth—a fallen earth; the sphere of the other will be above the heavens—perfect and

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incorruptible. The light of the one will be obstructed by the presence of the flesh, and the feebleness of the creature; the other will shine in all the unhindered perfectness of God. These differences, however great, are nevertheless circumstantial and not essential; for the light in which both the heavenly and earthly city will shine, is from, and because of, one Christ, and in the power of one Spirit. Nor will the difference continue. As soon as the millennium shall have passed, and "the dispensation of the fulness of times" have come, all the distinctions necessary to be maintained whilst this first-Adam earth exists, will be abolished, and all the redeemed shine together in the light of the perfect day. Such are the blessings which the stones of the breast-plate, as they once shone in the light of the presence of the glory of God in Israel's sanctuary, had of old betokened: and although the covenant seemed not to grow, though no brightness answering to the jasper and the sardine stone was found in Israel and little in the Churches, yet the moral excellency and the outward glory, as of the Church, so also of Israel, were, in this vision, seen alike secured in the person of Him who sat upon the throne—Him in whom the life and the glory and every blessing of all the redeemed are treasured, for we are "IN HIM that is true," even the true God. Well, therefore, might the colours of the jasper and the sardine stone (lost, as they had been, on the earth) be presented to the eye of John, as the

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likeness of Him who sat upon the throne. There they are preserved for us; there maintained in their excellency. Union with the person of the Son of God is the great characteristic blessing of the whole family of the redeemed; and therefore, whatsoever moral lustre or light of outward glory may, in the ages to come, be possessed by men, it will flow to *them* only because it is first found in Him in whom all fulness dwells, and out of whose fulness they receive "grace corresponding to (*ἀντί*) the grace" that is in Him. That bright excellency of character and of glory which is now found in Him who sitteth on the throne, is in Him preserved for us, in whom it is soon to be manifested in like radiancy of beauty. And therefore we read of the heavenly city, the bride of the Lamb, that "her light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone clear as crystal": and of Jerusalem, the earthly city, it is said, "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires; and I will make thy windows of agates and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones: all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children: in righteousness shalt thou be established." "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." Such are the results of His being as the jasper and the sardine stone who sitteth upon the throne: for He is

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the preserver now, even as He will be the communicator then, of all this exceeding grace and glory.*

The earth is next remembered. The rainbow, the ancient pledge of the earth's covenanted blessings, was seen in all its freshness—green as the emerald round about the throne. Evil men were then, as they still are, "destroying the earth"; and John was about to see how God would destroy *them.* (Rev. xi. 18.) He was to be taught, in vision, respecting the consummation of evil in those latter days on which we are now about to enter. He was to see the nations of the earth made drunken by the Harlot and reigned over by the Beast. He was to behold the wickedness and the glory of the earth's "merchant-princes"; and he was to witness their doom. He was to see in vision the heavens and the earth shaken; stars falling; mountains and islands moved out of their places: but before all

* It must not be supposed that what has been here said respecting "union" at all interferes with the value of the eternal priesthood of Christ. The priestly presentation of the whole family of God by the ministry of the anti-typical Aaron, is an essential and everlasting part of their blessing. But this is not the subject of the passage we are now considering. The jasper and sardine stone are not here connected with the priest ministering *before* the throne, but with the Person who sitteth *on* the throne. It reveals the *cause* or *source* of that perfectness of beauty of which presentation before God is a *result*. When the breast-plate was presented before God, Israel, in the person of their Priest, advanced, as it were, a claim to being bright and excellent as the stones on which their names were engraven. If the breast-plate when thus presented and inspected, was allowed to continue in the divine presence, the claim was sanctioned. Hence, I suppose, it was called the breast-plate of judgment.

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these things, before he was called to consider that fearful period of sin and judgment which is now drawing so nigh, he was permitted to behold the rainbow—the covenant-sign of the earth's blessing encircling the eternal throne. It taught him and it teaches us that the faithful power of the God of Israel, true to the covenant made with His servant Noah, will watch over and preserve the earth and that for blessing, till "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose." The sun and the moon, though for a short season to be darkened, shall resume their light, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people [Israel] and healeth the stroke of their wound. "*Then* shall the earth yield her increase, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." This may teach us in part to understand the connection of the rainbow with the throne of the Lord God of Israel.*

Around the throne, extending apparently in a

* The earth has never yet duly prospered under the Noachic covenant. God has faithfully given, according to His promise, "day and night, seed-time and harvest": but the earth still remains, for the most part, sterile and waste; and even where it is not neglected through idleness, or devastated by war and oppression, or smitten by divine judgment, the free circulation of the gifts of God is so interfered with by misrule or covetousness, that the nations that are most civilized often afford the direst examples of penury and need. Hence the necessity for the establishment of a righteous system of government among, all nations, through Israel and Israel's King, in order to give effect to God's earliest promises of blessing.

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semi-circular form on either side, were other thrones, in all twenty and four, twelve on this side and twelve on that side of the supreme throne in the centre. "And on the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and on their heads I saw crowns of gold." Here we find the first mention of the official glories of "the church of the first-born"; although still, as we shall see, in connection with Israel. By "the church of the first-born"* I mean all those who shall rise in "the first resurrection," and share in heaven, as well as on earth, the millennial glories of the Lord Jesus. We know from the rest of Scripture what the distinctive characteristics of this body are. In the first place they are redeemed — redeemed not from Israel merely, but "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." We know also that as "saints

* "Church of the first-born" is an expression that includes all the saints *of every dispensation* who shall be brought into the family of faith previously to the coming of the Lord. Christ is now called "the first-born from the dead." (Rev. i.) In the millennium all those who rise in the first resurrection will be known as the glorified "church or assembly of the first-born ones" (*ἐκκλησία τῶν πρωτοτόκων*), for they will rise or be born out of death at the *commencement* of the millennium; whereas millennial Israel, and the millennial nations that are saved, will not enter into the resurrection-state until after the millennium has passed, when the new heavens and the new earth are to be created.

Whenever in these pages I use the word "Church," *in contrast with millennial Israel*, I wish it to be remembered that I mean "the church of the first-born."

As regards the form of expression, compare Col. iv. 16, *τῇ Λαοδικέων ἐκκλησίᾳ*—church or assembly *composed of* Laodiceans See also 1 Thess. i. 1.

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of the high places," their prospective name in Daniel (קדישי עליונין), they are to reign with Christ above the heavens. Know ye not, said the apostle to the Corinthians, that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that the saints shall judge angels? Moreover, their calling is priestly as well as kingly—they are "a royal priesthood." They are also said "to have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 16), and although now knowing only in part, yet finally they are "to know even AS also they are known"—whence their capacity to share the counsels of God. Such are the characteristics of the Church's calling, as revealed in other parts of the Scripture; and such are the glories *symbolically* presented to us here. *Royal* power is indicated by "*the thrones*"—the elders were seen seated "on thrones." Their redemption is taught us by the words of their own thanksgiving thus recorded in the fifth chapter—"Thou hast redeemed US to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue and people, and nation." Their *priesthood* is taught by their employment—for they offer golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints (ch. v. 8). Their eldership and near proximity to the throne of the Most High are sufficiently plain indications of their being called into the participation of His counsels. Their white robes and crowns of gold identify them with the "overcomers,"—that is, those who "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," and keep Christ's works *unto the end* (ch. ii. 26), for to such the white

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raiment and the crown are promised (see ch. iii. 5, and ch. ii. 10). "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life." Their number twenty-four connects them with the number of Israel's priests: for Israel is not forgotten of the Lord even during the time of their blindness and desertion. Their priesthood is being from day to day prepared, and when the vail shall at length be taken from their eyes, they will find that in "the Church of the first-born," they have a risen and glorified priesthood, belonging to the heavenly places not made with hands, who, as the antitypical children of Aaron will minister with Christ, the great High Priest, in garments of glory and beauty on the eighth or resurrection day. No question, therefore, need remain in any heart as to who they are whom the throned elders symbolize. They represent the Church of the first-born in *one* aspect of that heavenly glory which they shall share with their Lord, when at length the sovereignty of the world shall become His, and all things be put in visible subjection to His power.*

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* If Leviticus ix. be referred to, it will be seen that the sons of Aaron, the priests, after having been fully consecrated during seven days, entered on their ministration on behalf of Israel on the eighth day, and then the glory of the Lord appeared. The *eighth* day, answering to the *first* day of a new week, always in typical Scripture has reference to resurrection. When the Church of the first-born really enter on their resurrection-services the glory of the Lord will of a truth appear to all the congregation of Israel, who will then stand in the earth as God's reconciled and forgiven people.

As regards the number *twenty-four*, the sons of Aaron were divided

The vision of the throned elders may be regarded as revealing the highest manifested glory of the risen saints; for we cannot conceive of the creature being brought into nearer approximation to supreme wisdom and power. But nevertheless, this vision, complete as it is in the revelation of glory, does not declare our highest blessing. It makes known the glory of God in government, but it does not reveal those secret unmanifested blessings which will also pertain to us as children of the Father. The Sovereign, whilst displaying "the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty," may call around his throne his ministers and the high estates of his kingdom—persons who may be the very pillars of his power; but he may not love them nor count them worthy of his intimacy and friendship. In the bosom of his family, and the retirement of his palace, he may have other associates and other friends. David had many Joabs but few Jonathans. Jonathan he loved: Joab, though honoured because of his courage and his power, David could neither confide in nor love. Inconsistencies or deficiencies have, in human life below, sadly marred the characters of those in

into four and twenty orders, "to come into their service into the house of the Lord according to their manner, under Aaron their father, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded him." (1 Chron. xxiv. 19.) They also who were for song in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps for the service of the house of God were twenty-four courses. (1 Chron. xxv.) It will be observed how both these services are held by the elders—they present the vials and incense; they also praise and sing.

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whom some qualities of excellence have shone with distinguished brightness. Even Jonathan lacked the decision that caused Joab to follow David to the cave and to the wilderness. But with the Church in glory it will be otherwise. To *them* perfectness according to God will in all things pertain. They will not only share in the majesty of the kingdom and be glorious in power, they will, as children, be brought into the family of the one Father as those perfected in love. Thus knowing the Father they will be able to go forth into the courts of His government and to serve Him worthily as their God. They will realize the full value of the words of their Master then: "I ascend unto my Father and your Father: and to my God and your God."

All the symbols that we have as yet considered in this chapter have been indicative only of blessing. But this peaceful order is for a moment interrupted by a sight of terror. "Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices." If Israel and the earth had been reconciled to God; if they had been brought under the blood of sprinkling—in other words, if this chapter had been describing the *millennial* relation of the throne to things below, and not its present relation, we should not have seen it marked by this Sinai-character of terror. When the hour really comes for the innumerable company of the glorified, to which we by faith already belong, to be manifested on Mount Zion, thunderings and lightnings and sights of terror will

no longer characterize the throne in its relation to the things below. On the contrary, we read of a river of life then, pure as crystal, proceeding *from the throne* of God and of the Lamb. He will open His hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. At present, however, though our faith may be cheered and strengthened throughout this present dispensation of sorrow by seeing the eternal throne surrounded by symbols of our future glory, yet the "thunderings and lightnings and voices" stand to us as an abiding memorial that the glory indicated is future, and that all below (the suffering Church alone excepted) remains as yet unreconciled to God.

But the "thunderings, lightnings, and voices" are the only symbols of terror, and we quickly return to those of blessing. The likeness of the jasper and the sardine stone attaching to Him who sat upon the throne, has taught us the *source* of all our excellency and glory. The elders represent one *form* under which that glory will be exhibited: the living creatures or cherubim, which remain to be considered, symbolize another. But before they are mentioned we find two other symbols—one indicating not the form of exhibition, but the *nature* of a power with which we are to be invested—the other indicating the perfectness of purity that will attach to our new condition of being. The first of these is represented by "the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven

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Spirits of God": the latter by the sea of glass like unto crystal. These two symbols stand to the throne just in the same relation as the golden candlestick and the laver did to the mercy-seat in the Temple.

Of the seven Spirits I have already spoken in the notes on the first chapter. They do not represent the Spirit of God in any character in which He has been possessed by, or manifested in, the Church. They do not represent Him as the Spirit who quickeneth, nor as the Comforter abiding in those whom He has quickened: they represent Him in another office, that, namely, in which He subserves the providential government of the throne of God. They are described therefore as "the Spirits of God sent out into all the earth" (see ch. v. 6), and again, as "the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him." (2 Chron. xvi. 9.)

Nothing, perhaps, amongst all the attributes of God is more wonderful than this universality of omnipresent control; all the merely executive agents of His government being subordinate thereunto. And when we remember how the universe teems with living agency, good men and bad men, angels and devils—all acting with unceasing energy, and some in professed independence of God and opposition to God's holy will; and that there is not an action, nor even a word, that proceeds from this

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infinity of agency that is without result, but that each produces its effect and needs therefore to be watched lest it should not fall into its fitting place in the vast machinery which is working steadily on to an appointed end—when we consider, I say, that the universe, morally as well as physically, is under a superintendence that controls the consequences of action both human and angelic, as certainly and effectually as the revolutions of the planets in their spheres, it gives a view of almighty and omnipresent power, more wonderful perhaps than the original power of creation, or that whereby the things that have been created are, from age to age, upheld.

This power is at present possessed and exercised by the Lord Jesus. We are distinctly told in the fifth chapter that He hath "the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth"; but to His saints no such power of control is at present communicated. At present "His divine power has been given to us" only so far as is necessary for present purposes of life and godliness. (2 Pet. i.)* We reign not as yet. But since it is said in the Scripture that we are "the fulness of him who filleth all in all," and also that we are to be made "like him," and "joint-heirs with him," and since the Lord Jesus has Him-

* "According as his divine power hath been given us (δεδωρημένης ἡμῖν) in all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us by his own (ἰδίᾳ) glory and virtue." (2 Pet. i. 3.)

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self said, "the glory which thou hast given me I have given them that they may be one even as we are one," how can it be doubted that the Church will participate in this branch also of His glorious power? *

Next in order, and also standing in front of the throne was seen a sea of glass like unto crystal. This was in the fore-ground, in front of all that has yet been mentioned; so that the throne, the elders, the seven lamps, and even the cherubim, were within it, and could only be reached from without by passing the sea of crystal which was placed before them. It stood therefore to all that was within it just in the same relation as the laver of the Tabernacle, or the molten sea of Solomon's Temple, did to the holy place. No priest could enter the sanctuary without first passing and washing at the laver: but when he had received the cleansing of that holy vessel he was a person typically separated from all the impurities of earth, and fit for the heavenly courts. He was

* The possession of this power as regards external action in the earth, or rather in the universe, appears to be indicated by the eyes which cover the living creatures within and without. The eyes as connected with the cherubim must be interpreted in harmony with "*the seven eyes*" as seen in the Lamb. In Him this power essentially and inherently *is*; to us it will only come by communication. It is seen in Him personally, in the same sevenfold completeness as when represented by the seven lamps burning before the throne; and therefore the number seven is applied to Him only, not to the cherubim. The multitude of eyes is, I apprehend, the emblem of diffusive agency: the seven, of that which is possessed in all completeness and in perfectness of concentration.

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typically what we are actually, as regenerated by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*—born again out of the old into the new creation of God. Such is the blessed truth taught by "the sea of glass like unto crystal." Like the brazen sea of the Temple, it shows, though in brighter excellency, the nature of that purity which has been given in Christ, for He is the true laver and the true sea of crystal, and unless we had that purity, God's free gift to us in Him, unless we had a title to go within that sea as possessors of a purity worthy of being represented

* The laver, of old, imparted to the priests a typical cleanness that entitled them to enter into the sanctuary of God. It typically cleansed them from everything that was unfit for His holy presence. Such is Christ to the believer. God through Him cleanses us from all that pertains to us and to our nature, as children of the first Adam that sinned, and gives us a new condition of being, similar in purity to that possessed by Him through whom we are cleansed. In Him we are cleansed not only of our sins but of ourselves; and, accordingly, they who were washed at the laver stood typically regenerated, and fit to receive that holy anointing oil of which it was said that "on man's flesh it should not be poured" (Ex. xxx. 32), as if to indicate that they who had been washed were typically divested of the flesh. Thus in the Ephesians and Colossians all believers from the simple fact of their union with Christ in death and resurrection, are said "*to have put off* the old man." (ἀποθέσθαι.)

It is remarkable that the laver was made from the mirrors of the women of the congregation. Moses was commanded to melt the mirrors, and from them to form the laver. The mirror is that which reflects ourselves. We see our own natural features there. If we are satisfied with our own likeness, by all means let us keep the mirror and gaze on it for ever: but if not—if we find reason to abhor ourselves and to shrink from the sight of our own deformity, how shall we thank God for taking away the mirror, and substituting in its stead a laver that cleanses us from all that is unfit for His presence, and separates us from our natural selves!

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by the pure and transparent crystal, we never could even approach that throne, much less be made partakers of its glorious power.

But there is yet another character of power, which the Church is to exercise in the hour of its glory. Admission into the counsels of God is represented by the throned elders, omniscient power of superintendence by the seven Spirits; but the execution of the will of God, and the power necessary to its execution, is also committed to the redeemed. This is a third aspect of their glory. They are in this represented by "the living creatures" or cherubim.

That the cherubim symbolized the redeemed is manifest from their own ascription of praise to the Lamb. They, as well as the elders, say "Thou hast redeemed US unto God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Ch. v.) Nor is it conceivable that the saints should be joint-heirs with Christ without being invested with this character of power.

The vision of Ezekiel affords the fullest description of that power which the cherubim denote. They are there described not as in the Revelation, in rest above the heavens; but in earth, surrounded with all the attributes of their agency, in strict adaptation to the circumstances of their earthly service. "The living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning. Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the

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living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides, and they turned not when they went. As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels." What can be more significant of the resistless course of almighty power? These terrible wheels, combining the movements of four, without losing the unity of one—each one advancing swift as the lightning, in its straight-forward course, not to be resisted by any strength or checked by any impediment—each going upon its sides and yet none revolving—moving at once northward and southward and eastward and westward, and yet being but as one wheel—nowhere absent but everywhere present in the perfectness of undivided action, afford

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the mysterious, but fitting, symbol of the omnipotent agency of the power of Him before whom "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. iv. 35.)

In the Revelation, however, the cherubim are not, as in Ezekiel, acting in the earth. In Ezekiel, they were seen *below* the firmament of crystal; but in the Revelation they are withdrawn from the earth into the presence of the throne, within the sea of crystal; and this, because of Israel's sin. "I will go and retire into my place, till they acknowledge their offence." But the deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea, the fall of Jericho, the deliverance of Elisha when multitudes of unseen hosts surrounded him, the destruction of Sennacherib, and many other like interventions of the omnipotence of God, are proofs of what this power was able to effect, and what it once did effect, on behalf of Israel and Jerusalem. But the vision of this power was shown to Ezekiel, only that he might bear witness to its withdrawal. He saw it gradually depart, until at last it was hidden in heaven; and accordingly, in the Revelation, we find it there; but no wheels were seen, only cherubim, and they in rest, save only toward God; for their agency in the earth has for the present ceased; nor will it be restored until the order of the millennium begins.

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The restoration of this power is the subject of the conclusion of Ezekiel's vision.*

And when we consider what the state of the earth will be when that period arrives—Antichrist having just filled the world with wickedness, and Israel with desolation—darkness covering the earth and gross darkness the peoples—when to Israel it is said "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things; the nations shall see and be confounded at all their might; they shall lay their hand upon their mouth; their ears shall be deaf; they shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth; they shall be afraid of the Lord our God and shall fear because of thee," (Mic. vii. 15)—when this hour at length arrives, we may well see the necessity for cherubim-strength, and the high calling of the Church in being entrusted with its application to the circumstances of a terrified but rescued earth—an earth stricken, that it might be healed.

The various characteristics of this power are denoted by the forms of the four living creatures. But the human figure does not predominate as in Ezekiel, for here they are abstracted from human

* In the Revelation no *wheels* were seen, only cherubim, because "wheels" denote the course of this divine agency as acting in the earth. Accordingly, in the seventh of Daniel, where the Session of the Ancient of days is described and Christ is invested with the power of earth, "wheels" are mentioned; because this agency will at that time be introduced into the earth again.

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things into the immediate sphere of divine existence. The first living creature was like a lion—the symbol of power in its majesty, terribleness and strength. "A lion which is strongest among beasts and turneth not away for any." (Prov. xxx. 30.) "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion." (Prov. xix. 12.) Two lions stood by the side and twelve lions on the steps of Israel's throne (2 Chron. ix. 18); and Israel's king is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

But the second living creature was like a calf, for power should have other characteristics besides majesty and terror. Strength that surrenders its neck to the yoke and its shoulder to the burthen, in patient ministry to the need of others, is a characteristic of power less dazzling indeed, but perhaps more blessed than any display of the majesty of its glory. Hence, He who is to be known as the Lion of Judah, is again and again typified in Scripture by the ox. In Leviticus, the bullock stands as the highest type of Jesus, in patient, self-denying labour. We need not wonder, then, that this patient character of strength, and ready subjection to the burthen (in Him the result of willing love) will still attach to the power with which His saints will, through and under Him, be invested in the glory.

"The face of a man," which characterized the third of the living creatures, represents not, I think, *intelligence*, (that appears to be symbolized by the eyes found in all the cherubim alike), but it indicates that sympathy with humanity and acquaintance with

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its condition, which will adapt the exercise of this power to the circumstances of men.* Quickness of sight and rapidity of execution are the characteristics of the eagle; and this closes the description of the attributes that will attach to the ministers of the executive power of God. They will have the strength and majesty of the lion; the patient endurance of the ox; the sympathies and reflective character of man; the keen perception and rapid execution of the eagle; and as such will apply to the earth and to the universe the wisdom of the elders and the throne.

And although the symbols of this chapter might almost seem to exalt the creature into co-equality with God, yet we find His due supremacy most carefully maintained. The glorious power of the cherubim does not prevent their giving all glory, and honour, and thanks, to Him that sat on the throne; nor does the higher exaltation of the elders

* Power, therefore, and strength as represented by the lion and the ox, will in the redeemed be associated with human sympathies and feelings. Symbols significant of strength might be applied to that which is simply divine; but Christ has also been made "like unto his brethren *in all things*," sin excepted; so that human sympathies are connected with the Lord in His glory, as they will be with the saints in theirs.

We must remember, too, that when the millennium begins, there will remain in the earth much to be borne with and to be dealt with patiently. The subduing of all things to Christ will not be the work of a moment, but of the whole millennium. "He must reign till he hath put all things under his feet." In the exercise, therefore, of divine power to this end, patience and sympathy will find their place.

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prevent them from falling down before Him that sat on the throne, and, as creatures, worshipping Him that liveth for ever and ever, and casting their crowns before the throne, saying, "Thou art worthy, O our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they were, and have been created."

Thus, then, there will be a time when the possession of wisdom and power, even by man, will no longer lead away from God; but, whilst making him blessed in himself and the channel of divine blessings to others, will yet leave him humble and obedient still—conscious that he has nothing but what he has undeservedly received—ready, therefore, to take the place of lowliest worship, and to render homage to Him from whom all things proceed. The moral perfectness, therefore, which naturally falls into this position and enables us to say, in truth and in understanding, "Holy, holy, holy," will be an exhibition of the result of redemption, no less wonderful than the gift of this exceeding glory.

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CHAPTER V.

On Revelation V.

WE have seen how fully the high and distinctive glories of "the church of the first-born" are revealed in the preceding chapter. The throne surrounded by the symbolic glories we have been considering, is intended, throughout all this present period of the Church's suffering, to stand before us as a sure and sustaining object of faith. We are not yet reigning in life, and therefore the sight of our future exaltation is presented to us only in symbols; but the glories indicated are not strange to the expectation of those who walk in the Truth. The excellency of the symbols teaches us the exalted character of the promised glory; their being seen in association with the throne, is the pledge that they are unchangeable and sure.

But the object of the Revelation is not merely to present to our faith these pledges of future glory. There is another object yet more immediate, and more directly concerned with our present testimony. That object is, the communication of prophetic

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instruction respecting things shortly to come to pass in the earth—instruction as essential to our testimony and service among men, as the vision of the glory to our comfort and the confirmation of our hope. The immediate object of Him who sat upon the throne, was to convey a book (the symbol of precise and definite instruction) to John, and through John, to the churches on the earth. "I saw in the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne a roll written within and on the back side, firmly sealed with seven seals."

John was standing before the throne in the weakness of the creature. He saw the book: he believed its instruction to be precious; yet neither he, nor any other creature in earth or heaven, dared to draw nigh and take it. "I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, neither to look thereon."

But hidden in the throne had been One who now *appeared* and assumed a new relation to Him who sat upon it. The words of the angel announced Him as the Lion of the tribe of Judah—the Root of David—a title familiar (at least in part) to the ear and to the thoughts of an Israelite: for Israel was expecting One who should arise in the majesty and terror of power, who should "cry, yea, roar and prevail against his enemies." They also believed what the Prophets had written respecting the glory of the house of David, through which judgment and righteousness should be exercised in the earth, and

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"Judah be saved and Israel dwell safely"; they believed that this glory had not departed for ever, though not one branch appeared to flourish on the withered stock of Jesse. They knew that Jehovah had made with David an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and so far would readily recognise that there was yet a root to the stem of Jesse: but further than this, mere Israelitish knowledge could not go. They had not yet learned (what John and the Church had learned) to explain the mystery of the oneness of David's Lord and David's Son.*

"The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David," advanced and took the book; but He did not appear as the Lion, neither as Jehovah in His glory, but "as a Lamb that had been slain." It was thus John had known Him. He had seen Him led to the slaughter; had seen Him pray for His murderers and die; had heard Him say in like

* Yet though John had learned to recognise many things that Israel knew not, he had not, on that account, forgotten nor rejected the "old things" that as an Israelite he knew, because new things had since been added to the store. "A scribe well-instructed unto the kingdom of heaven bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." John remembered the old things which the Prophets had spoken; he knew that they were not nullified, but only enlarged and confirmed by the things that had since been spoken by the Lord. In the vision, therefore, that he was now beholding, though he saw and heard as a Christian, yet he had not divested himself of the knowledge which he had received as one of that people "to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the law and the promises; whose are the fathers and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." (Rom. ix.)

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gentleness and meekness, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"; and now John beheld the symbolic representation of that power, for the Lamb had "seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth." He had all plenitude of glorious power; He was standing in the midst of the elders and cherubim and all the glory of the throne; He exercised all the power of that throne—yet He was still the Lamb. Neither did any of these things—whether His investiture with the power of the almighty throne, or His title, yet unasserted, of Lion of the tribe of Judah, or His own essential and now acknowledged deity, as the Root of David and all David's blessings,—withdraw Him from the place which He loves to take, of being "one that serveth." He had served His disciples in humiliation; He now showed that He could serve them in glory. He saw the tears of John; He knew their cause; He went, therefore, and took the book, and supplied the needed link of communication between the creature and God, and opened the designed instruction, not in the terror of the Lion, but in the meekness and gentleness of the slain Lamb.

Yet it is not difficult to see the reason why He should be here introduced as the Lion of Judah. In the first place, the majesty and terror connected with that name enhances the preciousness of His gracious love. But not only so—whilst Israel (blinded as to the Person) has yet held fast the hope

of Judah's Lion and David's Son, the Church has well-nigh forgotten both. The very fact that *the Lamb* has been clothed with power, and the consequent long-suffering that has been exercised towards all nations whilst the Gospel is being preached—the patient grace so abundantly traceable in the history both of the Church and of the world during the past 1800 years—all this has blinded our Gentile minds to the ancient hope of the fathers, and we have lost the knowledge of the Lion, in an imperfect knowledge of the Lamb. It was needful, therefore, that in such a Book as this, the Church should be aroused to the meaning of this blessed yet awful name; for it is the contrariety of all things in the earth to His title as the Lion of Judah, and the consequent necessity of enforcing this title by almighty power, that will bring on the coming judgments of the throne, and the day of the wrath of the Lamb. The book taken from the throne reveals the manner in which God is about to enforce the title of His Son as the Lion of Judah, and to manifest that He is indeed the Root of David; and, therefore, He may well be thus announced, even when taking the book as the Lamb; not that He might fulfil the judgments therein written, but that He might communicate instruction respecting them to the Churches. The *Lamb* "came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."

For a moment the Lamb (whose proper place

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during the present dispensation is the throne) quitted the throne and assumed an intermediate place between it and the creature; for John occupied the place of the creature. It was, indeed, only for a moment that this mediate place was taken; but heaven, or they who had the intelligence of heaven, observed it and understood its meaning. They saw in it the earnest of that coming hour, when the Lamb shall be seen to come from the throne (in the glories of which He is now hidden) and, taking abidingly His place betwixt the throne of the Almighty and a needy earth, become the effectual communicator of the blessings which will then flow from the throne of "the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth" to His redeemed and rescued creatures. As soon as the Son abidingly assumes the mediate place between the throne and the creature, the millennial age begins. In *anticipative* faith, therefore (for faith always regards the earnest as the substance) heaven sings the millennial song. The elders and the cherubim as representing the redeemed—those, that is, who rise in the first resurrection, sing it first; next the angels sing; and lastly every living creature gives thanks and praise; for the Lamb had taken a mediate place between the throne and the creature, as the connecting link of blessing, and the sight was hailed as if the hour of final triumph had fully come.*

* That this song is *anticipative* is manifest for various reasons—first, creation is not yet brought under the applied power of redemp-

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Nevertheless, that burst of joy was only for a moment. The notes of triumph soon died away, and visions of woe followed. But the remembrance of that song thus anticipatively sung, is intended to abide with us always—to accompany us through the dark scenes of present or future sorrow such as this Book reveals, and to comfort the Church during the whole period of its militancy. We are as those who have already heard and already sung, representatively, the millennial song. And let it be remembered, that the same love from the same throne that will by-and-bye pour forth blessing upon the millennial earth, is the cause of our present possession of this Book. Instruction will by-and-bye flow

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tion, but is still "groaning in the bondage of corruption." (Rom. viii.) Therefore, neither at the time when the Revelation was written, nor now, could every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and in the sea, "sing, rejoice, and give thanks," except *anticipatively*.

Secondly, the redeemed themselves will not sing the song of redemption and say unitedly, Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, &c., until they are themselves perfected in resurrection. But none of them are as yet raised; their spirits are with Jesus; their bodies in the grave.

Thirdly, the risen saints are here represented as giving thanks for *others*, and those others are described as "made a kingdom and priests unto God and reigning on the earth." This is precisely the relation in which the risen saints will stand to Israel on the earth, as soon as the millennium begins.

We cannot be too careful in remembering the corrected reading of this passage. "Thou hast redeemed US unto God by thy blood, &c. . . . thou hast made THEM unto our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign on the earth." See Appendix.

Until the saints who sleep are raised, and Israel is forgiven and reigning, and all creation released from its present groan, this song can only be sung *anticipatively*.

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to the millennial saints, and no sorrow withal—our portion on the contrary is instruction *with* sorrow; but if it will be a blessing then to receive rest, protection, and peace, it is no less a blessing now to be counted worthy of suffering with Him, and to share His reproach. Divine wisdom about human things is communicated through this Book, given from the throne, and it leads into present sorrow; but it supplies us with subjects of present testimony, in the midst of the glory and deceivableness of Satan, more precious than fine gold to him who remembers that even in the midst of all our present weakness, we have a title to rejoice and leap for joy, if, by walking in the truth, our names are cast out as evil for the Son of man's sake. Jeremiah was ordained a prophet against the nations, and his place was a dungeon; John was appointed to prophesy against (ἐπί) peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings (see Rev. x.), and his place was Patmos. Yet it is from the dungeon and from Patmos that that voice has gone forth which shall yet (in some cases at least) break the spell which has so long paralysed even God's own people, and shall arouse them from that evil slumber by which Satan has succeeded in nullifying the instructions of this Book; and shall cause them again to give a living testimony to the things which Prophets and Apostles have, in sorrow and in rejection, spoken.

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CHAPTER VI.

Notes on Revelation IV. and V.

Behold, a door opened in heaven.] "A *door* opened in heaven" is to be distinguished from heaven being opened, as in Rev. xix. and elsewhere. The first is a sign of entrance being granted into heaven; the second of something revealed in or from heaven. After John beheld the "opened door," he heard a voice saying, "Come up hither."

And the first voice which I heard was, as it were, of a trumpet speaking with me.] This is in accordance with the character of this Book, which carefully maintains the sense of distance between the creature and the glory of God. The trumpet is the symbol of distant communication. It was a very different character of communication from that which John, in other circumstances, had known, when learning from the lips of the Lord Jesus, or subsequently from the Holy Ghost, the comforting truths of redemption. We cannot but be sensible of this distant voice in reading the Revelation.

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Come up hither, &c.] These words do not refer to the being "seated in heavenly places in Christ," as taught in the Epistle to the Ephesians. In *that* sense, John had been in heaven ever since the ascension of Him who had risen as the Head and Representative of His people. Nor is this *temporary* withdrawal of John from the earth, in vision, a symbol of the future translation of the Church; for, in that case, we should neither have seen John retaining, as he did, the weakness of the creature; nor would he have been required to eat a "*bitter*" book (see ch. x.); nor would he have been sent back again to earth to testify "against peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (ch. x.) Such will not be the portion of the Church in resurrection. Moreover, it will be above angels and will not be tempted, as John, to fall down and worship them.

John was taken through "the door opened in heaven" *only to be instructed.* "Come up hither, and I will show thee things that must be hereafter." He was introduced into a measure of the thoughts and knowledge of heaven, but not into its glorious power of life and action. The Church as represented by John may be said to have entered also; at least, it is our title and privilege to enter; though practically we may despise our blessing, and linger outside this open door, listless or slumbering, on to the very end of our days of service.

I will show thee things that must be hereafter.] The

future things here spoken of as about to be shown to John, are found in the *sixth* and following chapters; their revelation being consequent on the reception of the book from the throne and its being opened by Jesus. The fourth and fifth chapters must therefore be regarded as introductory to that which is distinctively "the Revelation"; and which commences with the sixth chapter. The vision of the throne (although the symbols of the Church's future glory by which it was surrounded gave it *indirectly* a prophetic character) was in itself a *present* thing. The Lamb was *then* (as He still is) in the midst of the glory of that throne; and from that throne He rules. From that throne also, He took the book which He has opened. Eighteen hundred years ago He took the book; eighteen hundred years ago He opened the seals—the throne being a *then* present thing. One reason, indeed, why the throne was shown to John was, that he might see whence this most precious Book came, and be able to say, "the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him."

[Great care must be taken not to confuse the scene described in this chapter, with that described in Dan. vii., where the "Ancient of days" is prophetically seen sitting to judge and sentence the antichristian nations; or with that described in Rev. xx. when the final judgment of the dead takes place at the close of the millennium. The throne described in the chapter before us is the *eternal*

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governmental throne of the Lord God Almighty; shown to John that he and the suffering Church might be instructed and comforted; but both the throne on which the Ancient of days will sit, and the great white throne on which the Lord Jesus will sit at the final judgment, are *judicial*, not governmental, thrones; and are set for a special and temporary purpose only. The period to which this chapter belongs is that at which the Revelation was given, eighteen hundred years ago: the period to which the Session of the Ancient of days belongs is the end of the Times of the Gentiles when Antichrist and the ten kingdoms that follow him are to be destroyed: the period of the great white throne of Rev. xx. is the end of the millennium.]

I saw a throne.] The throne should be regarded, first as it is in itself, apart from the symbols which surround it: secondly, as it is in connection with those symbols. Considered by itself, it was the throne of Him "who liveth for ever and ever" —the eternal throne of Jehovah-Elohim-Shaddai, the Lord God Almighty—the covenant God of Israel. As such, it was the same as was seen by Isaiah and Ezekiel—unchanged and unchangeable throughout all dispensations.

But in this chapter it is not revealed by itself, but in connexion with certain circumstances and symbols which will not, *in the same manner*, attach to it when the present dispensation terminates. For example, as soon as "the sovereignty of the world shall

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become the sovereignty of our God and of His Christ," the Lamb will cease to be hidden in the throne; He will be known in the majesty of His own distinctive kingdom. The cherubim will be no longer seen at rest within the sea of crystal, without *wheels*—wheels being the sign of agency in the earth: on the contrary, they will again act in the plenitude of their power, as once seen by Ezekiel, *below* the firmament of crystal. The Sinai-character of the throne, marked by the thunderings and lightnings and voices (a character which it may well retain whilst Israel and the earth remain unreconciled by the blood of sprinkling), will no longer be found when the time comes for the accomplishment of all those blessed promises to Israel and to the nations, "which God hath spoken of by the mouth of all his holy prophets that have been since the world began."

The fact, too, that the book received by Jesus from the throne was both given and opened eighteen hundred years ago, chronologically marks these two chapters as pertaining to those past, and yet passing, years of the Church's militancy and sorrow. No such book ever will or can be given or opened again. Indeed, the Church in glory will not need it. We shall no longer need then *to keep* the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

The vision of the throne, therefore, must be regarded as peculiarly belonging to our *present* dispensation, and is only *indirectly* prophetic when the

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symbols are abstractedly considered, as indicating glories by and by to be possessed by those who shall reign with Christ.

It should be observed that many of the symbols of these two chapters, as indeed of the Revelation throughout, are derived from the Temple and its service. The jasper and sardine stone; the seven lamps of fire, analogous both in number and position to the lamps of the candlestick; the sea of crystal, answering to the brazen sea or laver; the presentation of the golden vials full of odours, indicating the priestly presentation of the prayers of Israel; and the number of the elders,—are examples.

But it is the adaptation of these things to the court of government and not to the service of the Temple, that is the predominant thought in these chapters. It is true that the cleansing of the same laver is alike required in those who stand in the holy place of the Temple and those who are associated with the throne of the almighty King. They to whom is communicated a measure of that power of superintending wisdom indicated by "the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne," must, according to the divine appointment, be also capable of being represented by the lamps of that candlestick which burns in His presence in the holy place. According to the order of the Melchizedek kingdom, he who sits upon a throne of government as an elder must also be a priest. The rule of the saints is priestly; but the court of government and the

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temple of priestly service suggest different thoughts, and are carefully to be distinguished. In these two chapters the throne, the thrones of the elders (the name elder being derived from those appointed to assist Moses in his government), the cherubim, and the seven Spirits sent forth into the earth, are evidently intended to direct our thoughts to the royal court of government.

The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Revelation are remarkably analogous in their testimony. Whilst Israel is without a priest, temple, and sacrifice, the Epistle to the Hebrews reveals that there is a Priest, a Temple, and a finished Sacrifice above the heavens for all the family of faith. The Revelation shows that although the throne of Judah is overthrown, and Jerusalem desolate or trodden down, yet that the government of the God of Israel is not suspended, but that He is still silently ordering all nations, and that, with the view of establishing His King upon His holy hill of Zion. Government is the predominant thought in the Revelation.

And round about the throne were thrones twenty and four, and on the thrones twenty-four elders seated.] "*Thrones*," and not "*seats*," should be given as the translation. When elders were appointed to assist Moses in the government of Israel, they were in number seventy. We might have expected, perhaps, to find the same number here, instead of "twenty-four," which is the number of priests. But the change is, I think, intentional, and designed to teach

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us that all government is, by and by, to be cast in the mould of priesthood. Formerly the elder was not a priest; by and by every elder will be a priest. David was not a priest—only a king: the Lord Jesus will be a Priest upon His throne. He is Melchizedek. Finally, all government will be seen in the priestly form, and the court of divine government become virtually identical with the Temple. "The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him." (Hab. ii. 20.)

With respect to the number "twenty-four," it should be further observed that it denotes orders or classes of priests, and not individuals. This makes the twenty-four elders a more fitting symbol for the whole priestly body.

Four living creatures.] Ζῶα. I scarcely need observe that "*living creatures*," and not "*beasts*," is the right translation. Θηρίον—the word rightly translated "*beast*," in the thirteenth and other chapters, is a word perfectly different from this. In the first of Ezekiel we find the corresponding Hebrew word, and it is there rightly rendered by our translators "living creatures." That the "cherubim" and "living creatures" are identical, may be seen from a comparison of Ezekiel x.

There are few more unfortunate translations than that of "*beasts*" for Ζῶα—"*living creatures*." No thoughts can be more contrasted than those which are suggested by "beasts," and "living creatures," or "cherubim." "Beast" is a word of well known

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evil meaning, both in Daniel and the Revelation. When the *beasts* of Daniel were permitted to establish themselves in the earth, and to tread down Jerusalem, that holy and blessed agency represented by the living creatures of Ezekiel and the Revelation was withdrawn from the earth; and as soon as those beasts have fulfilled their course, the "living creatures" will return. One of the great objects of the Revelation is to contrast the condition of the earth whilst under the last great "beast," with its condition when it shall be again brought under the heavenly agency of the cherubim.

It is important to observe, not only that the cherubim sing the song of redemption, saying together with the elders, "Thou hast redeemed US by thy blood, &c."; but that they, as well as the elders, act as priests in presenting the prayers of others; so that the Church, even in its executive character of power, is regarded as priestly.

We may find some difficulty, perhaps, in attaching symbols so different as those of the elders and of the cherubim to the same body—the Church: but it is a difficulty necessarily consequent on the blessed truth, that the Church is "the fulness of him who filleth all in all." No symbols and no language that did not suggest thoughts infinitely various, and sometimes apparently contradictory, could possibly describe the condition of those who are called into fellowship with divine glory. So is it also with the Lord Jesus Himself. What symbols

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not seemingly contradictory could describe His attributes and being as one with Him who sitteth on the throne; and also those offices which He holds as man, or as the King of Israel? A symbol which may describe Him as on Mount *Zion* surrounded by angels and risen saints; or as in Jerusalem on the throne of His father David, must not destroy another symbol which may declare His glory as God. He is at once the altar, the sacrifice, the laver, the mercy-seat, the candlestick, the priest. Infinity of relations concentrated in one Person is His characteristic; and to a certain extent it will characterize the Church too. Even here they are the brethren, the servants, the friends, the attendants, and the spouse of Christ. We are not to negative one relation by another, but to unite all.

It is interesting to observe the difference between the cherubim as mentioned in Genesis and in the Revelation. In Genesis they are described as entrusted with the executive power of God, wielding the flaming sword *against* man, and shutting him out from Paradise into a ruined earth. Such was man's first acquaintance with this executive power of God. In the Revelation we again see the cherubim; but to teach us what? To teach us that through redemption man is to be made the possessor of the very same glorious power which, after his sin, presented to him the first sight of terror.

They sung a new song, &c.] *New* because in character *millennial*. The words cannot be used, except

anticipatively, until the new age begins in the earth; for if the Church were at this present moment to be taken into glory, it could not say of Israel, "Thou hast made THEM kings and priests"; nor could every creature give thanks and sing now; for at present "all creation groans."

It is plain that Israel are meant by the saints whose prayers are presented by the elders and cherubim, because of none other than Israel could it be said that they are distinctively kings and priests *reigning on the earth*. We indeed are "kings and priests," but at present we suffer instead of reigning on the earth; and in that day we shall be above the heavens, acting as the risen priesthood of Israel.

Some have conjectured that the Church may be raised and sing this song above, during the period of Antichrist's reign and the divine judgments on Israel and the earth; but how *then* could creation sing when the earth and all things in it will be in their furthest distance from God? How could Israel be spoken of as made priests and kings, and reigning, at a moment when they will be in the very extreme hour of their direst tribulation and judgment?

Besides, what was the occasion of this song being sung? It was because the Lamb had taken the book from the throne and was about to open its seals. This can never be done again. The book has been received and the seals opened for eighteen

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hundred years, and, as a consequence, we have the Revelation as our guide.

The taking the book was a sign that there was One who was worthy to receive from the throne: the acknowledged right of the Lamb to open the book was a sign that there was some One worthy to *communicate* blessing also. Thus, in vision, the Lord Jesus ostensibly assumed for a moment a mediate place—mediate between the creature and the throne; and hence this anticipative song. When such a place is abidingly assumed, Israel and the earth will be reconciled, and the song be applicable to circumstances actually existent; and we shall no longer be obliged to contrast the words we sing in faith with the sad realities around.

The vials (φιάλαι) answer to the "bowls" or "basons" of gold which were placed in the holy place, near the golden altar. (See 2 Chron. iv. 22.)

There is a remarkable chapter in Leviticus which should be read in connection with the present passage. After the priestly family had been consecrated during seven days, on the *eighth* day they entered with Aaron on their priestly service in the sanctuary on behalf of Israel; and as a consequence the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. Moses also and Aaron unitedly blessed the people. See Lev. ix. This is a typical scene. Aaron was a type of Christ in His Priesthood, and Aaron's sons were typical of that priestly family of faith, who, through and with Christ, as soon as the eighth day

(*i.e.*, the day of resurrection) comes, will enter into "heavenly places not made with hands," there to pray and to minister on behalf of others, around and with their risen Lord. Thus the prayers of redeemed and forgiven Israel will be presented through Christ; and as a consequence Israel's blessings will come. The passage before us may therefore be considered as an antitypical accomplishment of the scene in Leviticus.

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CHAPTER VII.

On Revelation VI.

WE now enter on that part of the Revelation which may be strictly called prophetic. The sealed roll is here opened. But before we consider the specific statements of this chapter, it may be desirable to state some of the principles that are to guide us in our general interpretation.

The Revelation, from the sixth chapter onward, is, as I have already said, to be distributed into two great divisions. The first of these, extending from the sixth to the eighteenth chapter inclusively, treats of the period during which the Lord Jesus is seated, not on His own, but on His Father's throne; whereas the second division, extending from the nineteenth chapter onwards, treats of events that occur *after* Christ is sent forth in the exercise of His own millennial power, as "King of kings and Lord of lords." The first of these periods *precedes* the hour when (as revealed in Daniel vii.) the Son of man shall be brought before the Ancient of days

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and definitely invested with the sovereignty of earth: the second is subsequent to that investiture, and is the period when He *applies* the power with which He has been so invested. The former of these divisions is that which we have first to consider. It treats of the time during which the throne of Jehovah acts for Christ, while Christ waits, because rejected by Israel and the earth, "until his enemies be set as a footstool for his feet."*

The subject of this part of the Revelation is threefold. It describes, with much precision, the forms under which human evil will for the last time raise itself up against God: first, in the harlot whilst Antichrist is her servant (chap. xvii.); then, in Antichrist and the false prophet who ministers in his presence, after Antichrist and the ten kings with him shall have destroyed the harlot.† (Chap. xiii.) Secondly, it describes the manner in which God (as when of old He sent plagues on Pharaoh and Egypt) will again direct His judgments against these confederacies of evil, in preparation for the final mission of His Son. Thirdly, it reveals various aspects of the glory, which, as soon as the hour of Satan's

* At Armageddon they are gathered in order that they may be set (see Rev. xvi.); at the end of the nineteenth chapter we see them set as a footstool and His foot planted on them in wrath; even as Joshua planted his foot on the necks of the conquered kings of Canaan.

† "And the ten horns which thou sawest AND THE BEAST—these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire." Such is the right reading, See Tregelles. (Rev. xvii. 16.)

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triumph is over, will attach both in earth and in heaven, to those who share, in resurrection, the power of the Lord Jesus. Such, to speak generally, are the subjects of the Revelation from the sixth to the eighteenth chapter inclusive.

As regards the order of arrangement, two things should principally be noticed. This part of the Revelation consists of several separate visions, each complete in itself; none commencing previously to the time when God begins to visit the nations in anger, but each terminating as soon as it arrives at the period appointed for the manifestation of the Lord Jesus in glory. Many times in this part of the Revelation are we led on to the moment when Christ's glory is to be made manifest; but as soon as that point is reached, the vision closes. His mission in glory, although referred to, is not described; nor the events which follow thereon declared: the narration ceases, and a new vision begins; in which new vision we find the same period retraced and presented in fresh aspects. In this respect, the Revelation, in its structure, closely resembles the prophecy of Daniel; that also consisting of many separate visions, each complete in itself. The early visions are wide and comprehensive; the later more specific; all belonging (to speak generally) to the same period, but presenting different features of that period—the wide and general statements of the earlier visions, leading to enquiries, which the more specific descriptions of

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those that follow, answer. It is thus that these two books of prophecy may be made in great measure exponents of themselves.

Nothing can be more important in interpreting the Scriptures than carefully to observe this habit of *recurrence*. It is found throughout the whole of the Sacred Writings. Indeed, in all narration, whenever the subject treated of has various branches, it is necessary, after we have brought one part of our narrative to its conclusion, to return again and pursue the subject through another of its divisions; for in no other way can all the various features of a complex subject be fully and distinctly given. The same period, therefore, may thus be many times retraced; and the successive divisions of our narrative become, as to time, concurrent, and not chronologically subsequent the one to the other. The very earliest part of Scripture affords an example of this. The *first* chapter of Genesis brings us to the seventh day of rest, when all creation had been finished and God rested from all His work which He had created and made. The creation of man, both male and female, had been on the sixth day. This is mentioned in the first chapter; yet nothing there is said respecting the peculiar manner in which Eve was created. The description of her creation is not found until the second chapter, which consequently returns, and *retraces* the same period that had previously been considered. No one would think of reading the second chapter of Genesis throughout,

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as chronologically subsequent to the first; for, in that case, it would be necessary to say that Eve was created after creation had been finished. Yet mistakes no less strange have been made in reading prophetic Scripture, from neglect of this obvious principle. Again, the first chapter of Isaiah leads us through the whole scene of Israel's evil, on to the hour of God's millennial interference, when He "will turn his hand upon them and purely purge away their dross and take away all their tin; when he will restore their judges as at the first, and their counsellors as at the beginning." Thus the end is reached even in the first chapter; consequently, the subsequent chapters do but retrace, and variously illustrate different parts of the same period. The book of Zechariah, in like manner, consists of many separate visions *not* chronologically successive. So likewise the book of Daniel. The first vision, which is that of the Image, leads us on to the time when the Image is smitten, ground to powder, and the stone which smites it becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. No subsequent vision in Daniel describes anything beyond this limit. They all retrace, and develope other features belonging to the same period. The Revelation is written on the same principle. The chapter before us, which is the first in the series of prophetic visions, brings us to that final hour when men shall call "upon the rocks to hide them and on the mountains to cover them," because the great day of the Lamb's

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wrath will have come. The subsequent visions, on to the nineteenth chapter, do but retrace; until, in the end of that chapter, we find the manifestation of the Lord in glory and the actual inflictions of His wrath described. Yet the Revelation has been constantly expounded as if each vision followed, in order of time, that which had preceded; and hence hopeless perplexity has been the result.*

* That the Revelation, in neither of its two divisions, is a consecutive history of events in the order of fulfilment, may be proved again and again, by a reference to the Book itself. The seventeenth chapter, for example, which describes the condition of Antichrist and his power *before* the ten kingdoms agree to destroy the harlot and to give their authority to him, is, in point of time, earlier than the thirteenth chapter, which describes the condition of Antichrist *after* he has received that power.

Again, the wickedness described in chapters xii., xiii., and xiv. cannot be *subsequent* to the period referred to in the *sixth* chapter, when heaven and earth are shaken, and all the mighty men and the chief captains, and every bondman and every freeman call upon the rocks to hide them, because the great day of the Lamb's wrath has come. Babylon and Antichrist do not flourish *after* this; on the contrary, their abominations are the cause of that day of wrath. These are instances taken from the first division of the prophetic part of the Revelation. An example no less plain occurs in the second division also. The first eight verses of the twenty-first chapter describe the condition of the new heavens and the new earth *after* the millennium, when the heavenly city, New Jerusalem, descends into the *new* earth, where there is no longer any pain, or sickness, or death—all former things having passed away. But when the first eight verses of the twenty-first chapter have thus described the *post*-millennial dispensation, the *subsequent* verses of the same chapter, and the connected verses of the twenty-second, return to the millennium, and describe the relation of the heavenly city to the earth during the millennial age; for when the leaves of the tree of life are spoken of as being "for the healing of the nations," the *millennial* nations must be referred to, seeing that in the *new* earth there will be no nations that need, either physically or spiritually, any cure. These instances are sufficient to show that the Revela-

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Another rule carefully to be remembered is, that in every vision the consummation, which is one of blessing, is recorded *first*, prior to the events of evil and of judgment by which it is preceded and introduced. This arrangement could not have been adopted if the Revelation were a history of events in the order of fulfilment; but it is an order which the considerateness of love would suggest to anyone who desired to relieve the anxiety of another to whom he was about to tell a tale of sorrow. He would speak of the end *first*, silencing the awakened apprehension by the assurance that however great the preceding sorrow, the conclusion would be one of certain joy. He would do this, even if his tale respected things that were past; but how much more if he were prophetically narrating things to come. This, consequently, is the order which God has chosen in the visions of the Revelation—an order worthy of His goodness, and in strict consistency with the character He bears towards His children. Thus also fitting prominence is given to the great final object of faith; for to faith *the end*, however remote, is intended always to be the proximate object of apprehension.

The practice of noticing the closing event of blessing *first*, is common throughout the whole of

tion, like other books of prophecy, is written, not in the order of fulfilment, but of narration. If, then, these examples *prove* that the Revelation is not a consecutive history, it follows that any system of interpretation that treats it as a consecutive history (whether of events future or past) must be essentially erroneous.

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Scripture. In the second chapter of Isaiah, for example, the glory of *Zion* in the latter day, when all nations shall flow unto it, and learn of God, and walk with Israel in the light of the Lord, is mentioned first; and then follows the description of that awful hour of visitation which is to precede and introduce the day of glory. In the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus—a chapter which recites the feasts of Israel, we find the Sabbath, the type of that final rest which remains for the people of God, mentioned first, *before* the Passover and the other feasts are spoken of; although the full sabbatic rest is evidently the ultimate point of blessing to which the Passover, and other such provisions of grace, lead. In the Revelation, if the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters be examined, it will be found that they form one connected vision. But the former of these chapters reveals a scene of triumph which cannot be reached until all the dark circumstances of the succeeding chapter have first been fulfilled.

The fifteenth chapter (drawing its symbols from the circumstances of Israel's triumph on the safe and happy side of the Red Sea, where they sang with Moses their song of victory) describes the final condition of God's delivered people when the hour of Antichrist shall have passed: whereas the chapter that follows describes the hour of his blasphemies, and the plagues sent by God on him and on his kingdom. The fifteenth chapter speaks to us of God's holy habitation and the triumph of His people

there; the sixteenth recites the tale of the house of bondage. Another example may be found in the relation which the fourth and fifth chapters bear to the rest of the Book that follows. Those chapters preface and introduce the Revelation. Yet the glories symbolized in them and the anticipative millennial song of the fifth chapter will not be realized until all the woes of which the succeeding chapters treat, shall have passed for ever.

And now let us apply these principles to the chapter before us. Its chief subject is the infliction of divine chastisements* on the earth, until they are consummated by the day of the wrath of the Lamb. But neither the manifestation of the Lord in glory nor the judgments which succeed that manifestation are here described. The description of the manifestation of the Lord, and of the judgments that follow that manifestation, is reserved for another portion of this Book. The consternation, indeed, produced by the sense of the arrival of the day of the Lamb's wrath is described; heaven and earth are, in the vision, shaken, and men's hearts fail them for fear and looking after the things that are coming on the earth; but the subject is not pursued to its

* It will be remembered that I distinguish "*chastisements*" from "*judgments*." This, as to words, may be said to be an arbitrary distinction; but it is a distinction very important as to the things denoted. The plagues on Egypt, seeing that they allowed of repentance, were very different from the totally destroying judgment which fell upon Pharaoh in the Red Sea; for *that* admitted of no repentance, and was inflicted by the hand of the Lord himself, present in visible glory.

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conclusion. Suddenly the vision closes, and a new vision begins. Such is the character of this first prophetic chapter of the Revelation. Like initiatory visions in other books, this chapter is brief and general, and suggests many enquiries which find their answer in a subsequent chapter: but if it were the only portion of the Revelation that had been given, it would teach us, with sufficient distinctness, what the conclusion of this present age is to be. We should never have deluded ourselves and others by the expectation of days of increasing light and blessing if we had remembered that the scenes of judgment described in this chapter, followed by the day of the Lamb's wrath, are to *precede* the final victory of righteousness and Truth.

That final triumph, although last to be accomplished, is nevertheless the first subject of announcement in this chapter. I say of *announcement*, because the Lord Jesus opened the seals, not that He might accomplish the events indicated under them, but that He might, as directed of God, prophetically instruct us concerning them: else, the seals could not have been opened, as they then were before the eyes of John, and the events remain (even as they still do) unaccomplished. The great end, therefore, is first announced, before those events are spoken of, which, by God's appointment, are necessary to the attainment of that end—that end being the mission of the Lord Jesus in majesty and glory, that He may go forth "conquering and to conquer." "I saw and

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behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer." "Conquering and to conquer" are words capable of being applied to One only; for they imply eternal, never ending victory. Men of the earth—wicked men, and especially the last great Antichrist, may be allowed to triumph gloriously for a season; but it cannot be said of *them* that they go forth conquering *and to conquer*. Such words belong only to One. They describe the Lord Jesus in the exercise of His millennial power, including its earliest display in those judgments wherewith Christendom, and Jerusalem, and the ten apostate kingdoms of the Roman world, will be severally visited; but referring mainly to that continued extension of His sovereign rule which shall end finally in the subjugation of all enemies. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents, the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts: yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." (Ps. lxxii.)

The forty-fifth Psalm is perhaps the best commentary on that which the opening of the first seal discloses. That Psalm is clearly millennial. It is to be read as the meditation of some father or elder in Israel who sees before him the King in His

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beauty. "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty." When Israel last beheld Him, though He was even then "the Son of God and the King of Israel," He was without form or comeliness in their eyes; they saw no beauty in Him that they should admire Him; they thought that He was "stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." The tongue of Israel, therefore, was dumb; their mouth was closed at Him, or, if opened, opened only in reviling. But in this Psalm, the tongue of the elder and instructor of Israel has become like the pen of a ready writer; and he speaks his meditations touching the King. We hear no longer of the "visage marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men"; but of His being fairer than the children of men—of grace being poured into His lips—of His being blessed of God for ever. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty; and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness, and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." Such is the address to Israel's King, when, like the symbolic rider on the white horse, He shall go forth "conquering and to conquer." But these are not words whereby we can address Him now. It is now the time of "the foolishness of preaching," "the weakness of God," a time when truth and righteousness are allowed to suffer, and God interferes not for their vindication; but pursues, in patient grace, the ministry of recon-

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ciliation, "preaching peace by Jesus Christ." The sword of righteous vengeance is not yet girded on; neither does He as yet "ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness." The goodly things of nature—"the myrrh, the cassia and the ivory," are not yet consecrated unto the Lord; neither is He as yet surrounded by the risen Church of the first-born as His "fellows," the partakers of His glory. The daughter of Jerusalem does not as yet stand as "the queen at his right hand arrayed in gold of Ophir," *i.e.*, in the full excellency of a heavenly calling manifested and maintained on the earth; neither as yet are the daughter of Tyre and "the daughters of the famous nations" ready to follow in the train of the daughter of Zion, as they shall by and by follow her, when the hour comes for her to be led with rejoicing into the palace of the Great King.

All these things are future. They are the results of the rider on the white horse going forth "conquering and to conquer." Very different is the condition which the Revelation discloses as now about to be among the nations. Jerusalem is soon about to become the seat of such abandoned wickedness as "spiritually to be called Sodom and Egypt." The moral character of the Gentile nations, at the same period, may be learned from the character of the symbol employed to indicate the system which will then sway them and direct all their energies. That system is symbolized by a woman "arrayed in

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purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." (Rev. xvii. 4.) The nations thus characterized and Jerusalem will together fall into the toils of Antichrist, and (rejecting God) will worship *him*; until at last, when the whole world teems with the prosperity of evil, and Satan seems to have effectually triumphed, God will interfere, as against Pharaoh of old, to vindicate His own outraged holiness. Hence the mission of the red, the black, and the pale horses.* War as an immediate infliction from God, famine, and then, multiplied destruction by sword, by hunger, by death, and by the beasts of the earth, are successively predicted—forming a series of divine visitations reaching on to the period when *He* shall come, who, by one final blow, shall terminate the

* A horse is a symbol frequently used in Scripture (see Zechariah) as the emblem of divine power employed or to be employed in the *earth*. Power intended for heaven would not be represented by this symbol. It is manifest that these horses of woe indicate *divine* power directed against human things, for none else but God could "take peace from the earth," or "destroy with famine, pestilence and the beasts of the earth." As regards the extent of this destructive agency, it is universal throughout the whole sphere contemplated, which cannot be more narrow than the Roman world. Moreover, there is evidently no restoration or revival from the blows given. They follow one on the other, and continue in operation until the great consummation in the day of the Lamb's wrath. The very fact that the kingdoms of the Roman world are not at the present moment under such inflictions is a proof that the whole chapter is future; for, I repeat, when once these inflictions commence they will never terminate until the great final end.

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empire of evil and establish the everlasting reign of righteousness.

Yet in the midst of all this abounding iniquity and the inflictions consequent thereon, there will be found some faithfulness to God and to His Truth. There will be some who will lay down their lives "because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they held." Their souls were, in the vision, seen under the altar. That altar—the golden altar of incense—symbolizes the place of the priestly intercession of Christ. It represents the place where the risen priesthood—the Church of the first-born glorified, will by and by be gathered, clothed in their garments of glory and beauty, returning thanksgiving for men below, and seeking new blessings for them from the covenant God of Israel. But here they are seen, not standing in glorified bodies *around* the altar, but their souls *under* it, as in the place of the ashes, crying for vengeance —"How long, O Master, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" so entirely, during the mysterious period of Israel's blindness, is the holy place turned into a place of judgment to them and not of blessing. The cry was not unheeded, although the answer to the petition was for a while delayed. A white robe, the sign of their being numbered among "the overcomers" (see Rev. iii. 5) was given unto them; and they were told that "they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and

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their brethren that should be killed as they were should be completed"—another evidence that some faithfulness to God and to His testimonies was yet remaining in the earth.

The sixth seal is next opened, and the concluding scene of this first vision is given. We behold the signs which immediately precede the manifestation of the Lord in glory. The Lord Jesus had before said, "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Such are the signs which are seen in the vision here. Men recognise them and tremble. They say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" Thus far this vision leads us: but no more is revealed. It is not the intention of this part of the Revelation to describe the manifestation of the Lord in glory, or to speak of the events which follow that manifestation. Accordingly the vision closes, and in the next chapter a new vision begins.

In reading, therefore, this chapter, we must endeavour to realize the condition of the Roman nations at the time of the end, when the habits and

civilization of Western Europe will be planted in Jerusalem and the connected Asiatic regions. That those regions will form the great theatre on which the closing events of this dispensation are displayed, the whole of Scripture declares; and existing circumstances have at last awakened in the world at large the expectation of these countries becoming again the centres of commerce, civilization, and refinement. Egypt is arising before their eyes. The cities of Asia Minor and various parts of the Turkish Empire are becoming seats of commercial energy and wealth. Palestine awaits the return of Israel. Missionaries of the religious principles of Europe and political emissaries are spread over the districts of Nineveh and Babylon; and plans are being formed for re-opening the navigation of the Tigris and the Euphrates. The concentration of European resources and wealth in India on the one side, and the vigorous energy of Western Europe on the other, have already caused Syria and the Euphratean districts to be placed, as it were, between two mighty levers, which must, if permitted to continue their action, infallibly raise these central regions into a prosperity as great (indeed, as we learn from Scripture, greater) than that of the countries employed to elevate them. The rise of spurious and adulterated Christianity and of worldly civilization in those Eastern regions, will doubtless dispel the cloud of barbarism that has so long covered them with desolation, and will spread a fair and delusive

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brightness over the renovated scene. Men, and even Christians, are already snared by the expectation, and are anticipating the happy consequences of the spread of European light and knowledge in the favoured countries of the East. The establishment of modern European principles in those countries will unquestionably be an era in the history of the world—an era no less important than the sudden profession of Christianity by Constantine and the Roman world, although perhaps more silently and gradually effected. But what darkness and error has flowed from regarding that change under Constantine as the real work of the Spirit of God! Just so, I believe, will even deeper darkness settle in upon those who shall be content to welcome the coming prospects of the East as being the work of God in blessing. Those Eastern nations and their cities are declared in the Word of God to be under His most special curse. They cannot be raised except in open contravention of His declared resolve. The attempt to raise them may for a moment succeed: but it will be the commencement of a manifested collision between man and God; and which is the stronger of the two?

The attempt to elevate these nations will infallibly bring the ways of man into direct collision with the counsels of God; but it is an attempt that will be persevered in; for those countries are the field in which, according to the express declarations of

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Scripture, the harvest of human evil will be allowed to ripen. The long continued progress of human greatness (which, though occasionally checked, has nevertheless steadily advanced from the Flood on to the present hour) is to attain in those regions of the East the final point of its development. It was around the Tower of Babel in the land of Shinar that those principles commenced which, after a growth of four thousand years, will be developed in their maturity in the land of Shinar again. (See Zech. v.) What delusion, then, can be more deep than that which assigns to the Spirit of Christ those agencies which now, under the name of civilization, are bringing in the consummation of the mystery of iniquity in the completed apostasy of the latter day?

Whether the visitations of divine wrath, which the horses in the sixth chapter of the Revelation symbolize, extend beyond the ten kingdoms of the Roman world I do not undertake to say. Perhaps they may reach those countries which, attracted by the blaze of these nations' greatness, may covet their honours or their gain. Speaking generally, however, I consider the sphere of the Revelation to be the Roman world, with Jerusalem and Babylon for its centres. The same principles of evil, indeed, may work and are working elsewhere; but it is in the Roman earth only that their full maturity will be seen. The mercy of God has set bounds to the last great development of human evil. Of this, also,

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He has said, "Hitherto shalt thou go and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

It is not the object either of the Revelation or of any other part of Scripture to write the history of the world; nor even to trace, step by step, the gradual development of evil in those countries which are assigned as the special sphere for the manifestation of the great apostasy. It gives us the history neither of Popery nor Mahomedanism nor of any other similar systems, however wide or numerous the channels they may have opened to help forward the streams of iniquity into their final gathering place; but it confines itself to a description of the end. It places us between two contrasted periods, commencing with the time when the Gentile Churches were yet worthy of being represented by candlesticks of gold; and then, passing on to the close of the dispensation, it describes the moral and the outward characteristics of Babylon and of Antichrist, and so teaches us to judge of the character of the end. In describing the former period it shows what we have lost; in speaking of the latter it shows us the tendency of the principles that are now working around us, and warns us as to the dangers we have to shun. This manner of instruction is brief and simple; and when undertaken by God is perfect and sure. The danger of floating down the tributary streams will soon be understood when once we have apprehended the character of the vortex at the close.

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It is to these things that God in His mercy is now awakening the attention of many. The scattered and forsaken principles of Truth, which once formed the strength of the Church's separation in its unearthly calling, are being recognised; and some of them are being recovered. And thus while the dispensation, as a whole, is advancing with increased rapidity in its downward course, a place is found by some of security and peace and of waiting for the Lord from heaven.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Notes on Revelation VI.

THE following may be given as a division of the Revelation from the *sixth* to the *eighteenth* chapters inclusive.

The sixth chapter is a vision complete in itself. Its preface of blessing is in the second verse.

The seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters form one series, and should be read together. The tenth contains the preface of blessing, the three chapters which follow it referring, in separate narratives, to the same evil period, viz., the 1260 days, during which the two witnesses of God bear their sackcloth testimony in Jerusalem (see chap. xi.), and during which the woman clothed with the sun sojourns in the wilderness (see chap. xii.), and during which Antichrist reigns supremely (see chap. xiii.)

The fourteenth chapter should be read by itself. Its preface of blessing is found in the five commencing verses.

The fifteenth and sixteenth chapters form one

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vision. The preface of blessing is in the fifteenth chapter.

The seventeenth chapter must be read by itself. It describes Babylon *morally*, and shows that Antichrist first sustains, but afterwards destroys, the peculiar governmental system which will give to Babylon its distinctiveness morally. The first verse contains the announcement of destruction, previous to the description of that which is to be destroyed.

The eighteenth chapter describes Babylon physically, as regards its outward wealth and greatness. As in the former chapter, the announcement of the destruction is given before the description of that which is destroyed.

VERSES 1, 2.

"*And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying, as with a voice of thunder, Come. And behold a white horse,*" *&c.*

Nothing can be more important in interpreting the Revelation than to remember that the seals *have been* opened, and are never to be opened again; the result of their having been opened being, *not the fulfilment* of the event predicted, but the communication of prophetic instruction concerning it.

The sealed roll which the Lord Jesus took from the throne—God's gift to *Him*—was opened and read by Himself alone. No one else opened its seals or looked into it; and no one ever will. That roll per-

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tains to Jesus alone. It appointed the subjects respecting which He was to instruct His servants; and by the directions therein contained He guided Himself as to the instruction communicated. He chose, however, His own means of making the communication; using chiefly the instrumentality of an angel, by whom visions, in accordance with the directions of the sealed book, were shown to John. This shows us the relation of the sealed book to the Revelation as a whole; for thus the *whole*, not part merely, of the Revelation will be included under one or other of the seals. Under the seventh seal the commission to reveal embraced an infinitude of subjects—all, in fact, that is contained from the eighth chapter to the end of the Revelation.

One of the four living creatures saying, as with a voice of thunder, Come.] The word "Come" was addressed, not to John, but to the horse and its rider, who instantly came forth that John might see and be instructed. "Come," and not "Come and see," is the right reading throughout this chapter.

As the symbolic "living creature" is here seen engaged in communicating instruction to John, so, during the millennial reign of Christ, when the risen saints shall occupy that place in glory which is here symbolically held by the "living creatures," they (the saints) will no doubt be employed in teaching others who will still be in the flesh, as John then was, the things appointed for them to know respecting the ways of God in government. There is a propriety,

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therefore, in one of the living creatures being so employed in this vision, for in virtue of the saints holding, by and by, that place in glory which the living creatures in this vision hold, they will be empowered to instruct respecting such things. The "voice of thunder," just as "the trumpet" in the preceding chapter, maintains the sense of distance between John as a creature and the glory of God.

Behold a white horse, &c.] This symbol has been commonly understood to signify the triumphant progress of the Gospel, as now preached. The error of such interpretation must be manifest to any careful reader of the Scriptures, for

I. The Gospel, as now preached, is not and will not be triumphant: it is rejected. It is preached "for a witness." (Matt. xxiv. 14.)

II. This verse refers not merely to the progress but to *the primary sending forth* of that which it describes; and since the Gospel was sent forth many years before this vision (for the apostolic preaching of the Gospel, which of all preaching had been the most triumphant, had not only commenced but had ended), *that* "sending forth" cannot be referred to here; for the symbol is professedly *prophetic*, informing John of something that was to come to pass *hereafter*.

III. The symbol of "a rider on a white horse," &c., would not be used to designate a ministration like that of "the foolishness of preaching," a ministration too that is despised and set at nought. "A

sower going forth to sow," is a more appropriate emblem; and is accordingly used in the chapter which describes the history of Christianity in this present dispensation. (See Matt. xiii.)

IV. The Revelation must be interpreted in consistency with itself. As a whole, it is not intended to describe the patient ministration of God in grace; but, on the contrary, the enforcement of His will by power. It describes the enforcement of the title of Christ as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

And here I must again repeat that the Revelation is not a history of the world. It does not profess to record the events that have occurred either in the earth at large, or in the Roman world, during the last 1800 years. We need not therefore ransack secular history in order to find fulfilments for the predictions either of Daniel or the Revelation. No such continuity of historic instruction is attempted in either of these prophecies. That of Daniel is divided, as to time, into two great divisions—the first extending from Nebuchadnezzar to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, a period of about 600 years: the second commences at a period yet future, when Jerusalem, in unbelief, will again assume a national existence, and have a history of woe and judgment until its final forgiveness at the advent of the Lord in glory. The interval between these two divisions is, as regards detailed history, silently passed over in all the visions of Daniel.

Nor does the Revelation supply the history of the

prophetic nations during these 1800 years. It describes their condition at the close of the dispensation, when Jerusalem shall have again assumed a national position; but it does not describe the steps whereby that position is attained. If it had done this, not only must it have been enlarged into a history of the world, but it must have done the very thing which it purposely avoids, viz., have detailed the progress of the plans of men, instead of confining itself to the declaration of what God does against those plans when consummated. Nothing can be more distinct than the history *of a process of* construction, and a description of divine judgments poured out upon that which *has been* constructed. The nominal conversion of the Roman Empire under Constantine, and the invasion of the Roman world by the Gothic nations and others, have been supposed by many to be the subjects of the sixth and following chapters of the Revelation. But these two events (both permitted by the providence of God) have been made, under the hand of Satan, the means of advancing, not destroying, that system of human greatness which he is constructing for the latter day. New vigour has been infused by these events into the Roman earth. They are steps in the onward progress of evil; not destructive agencies from the hand of God finally and for ever prostrating its power. The subject of the Revelation is—these final agencies of God in judgment.

It has been supposed by some who have not fallen

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into the error of regarding the Revelation as being a history of the Roman nations, but who have rightly judged that the sending forth of the rider on the white horse indicates the future going forth of the Lord Jesus as the Joshua of His people,—it has been strangely supposed that all that follows in the Revelation, both in this chapter and in the rest of the Book, is subsequent to this going forth of the Lord in majesty and glory.

Such have not observed that the Revelation is written *in the order of narration, not of fulfilment.* How could it be possible that the cry of the saints under the altar saying, "Lord, how long dost thou not judge, &c.," should be uttered after the Lord has begun to judge and to help all the meek upon earth? No saint will be slain for the testimonies of Truth *after* the Lord Jesus has gone forth "conquering and to conquer;" and all who have been so slain previously, will be raised to meet Him and to be with Him when He goes forth in glory. How then could such cry, saying, "Lord, how long?" Moreover, will the wickedness of the harlot, and of Antichrist, and of Jerusalem flourish *after* the Lord has been sent forth conquering and to conquer? Will the ten kingdoms of the Roman world unite to give their power and glory for three years and a half to Antichrist, *after* that event? Will the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth *after* it? When the Lord Jesus thus goes forth in the majesty of His glory, neither the saints nor the Jews will be allowed any

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longer to be afflicted or trampled down. The saints will be taken to Him; the Jews (*i.e.* those who are spared among them) will be converted and forgiven. Moreover, the Lord Jesus will not come forth in the exercise of His own power until after He has been formally invested therewith. But He will not be so invested until the Ancient of days sits, as in Dan. vii.; and the Ancient of days does not so sit until the whole course of the Gentile empires has been run; for it is their *final* blasphemy that causes His session. "I beheld then *because* of the great words which the horn spake, &c." (Dan. vii. 11.)

A chœnix of wheat for a denarius, and three chœnixes of barley for a denarius, &c.] This indicates severe famine. It is said by ancient authors that "four chœnixes of barley meal were sold at Athens for one obolus"—Ἀθηνησι δ' εἰσι χοινικες τεσσαρες των ἀλφιτων ὀβολου ὠνιοι; and since there are six oboli in one denarius it follows that a denarius ought to have procured twenty-four chœnixes, whereas it would only purchase three. This being eight times the ordinary price indicates, of course, extreme scarcity; yet not such as to put it beyond the reach of the more wealthy; for whose sake apparently "the oil and the wine" were spared when "the staff of life" generally was broken. There can be few conditions of human life more terrible than when refinements and luxuries are found in the possession of the few, whilst famine is preying upon the mass around them. Human selfishness is not accustomed

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to resign its "wine and its oil" in order to minister bread to the perishing.

And hades followed with him.] Since the souls of departed saints do not now go to hades, but are with Christ, it follows that all who are now sent to hades die in their sins. The mention, therefore, of hades in this place appears intended to teach us that those on whom these desolating judgments come, are swept off unrepentant and unconverted, and that no saints are destroyed by *them*, though they may sink under the persecuting power of *man*, which is mentioned in the next verse.

And I saw under the altar the souls, &c.] It has been supposed by some that the gift of "a white robe" (for such is the right reading) to these martyrs, indicated their resurrection. If resurrection had been signified the saints spoken of would have been seen *arrayed in* white garments, as in Rev. vii., whereas the symbol is the gift of one white robe to the whole company,* and they are commanded to wait, *i.e.* to remain, as disembodied souls, under the altar. The *contrary* to resurrection is here implied.

[* Since this work was published in 1853, valuable evidence has come to light, enabling Dr Tregelles and others to decide that the ancient reading was ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἑκάστῳ στολὴ λευκή—*and there was given to them, to each one, a white robe.* As the late Mr. Newton set a high value on the results of Dr. Tregelles' labours, it is very probable that this reading would have been here adopted.

The argument of the paragraph is unaffected, however; for, whether one robe was given to the whole company, or one to each soul, it could only be given as a token or a guarantee that each of them should minister in such a holy garment when the time for their resurrection shall have come.—ED., 1904.]

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How very different is the language employed in Rev. xx., where resurrection is indicated. After the disembodied souls were seen, it is added, "They LIVED and reigned, &c., but the rest of the dead LIVED not (*οὐκ ἔζησαν*), &c. This is the first resurrection." The omission of any such language in this place would be sufficient of itself to show that resurrection is not intended here.

Moreover, if resurrection were here supposed, it would be needful to say that they who share in the first resurrection rise at *various* periods; but such a statement would be directly opposed to the instruction respecting the "order" of resurrection given in 1 Cor. xv. We are not at liberty to speculate concerning many *different* periods of resurrection, because *the order* of resurrection has been definitely revealed in the Scripture. The passage in 1 Cor. xv. is as follows: "So in Christ shall all be made alive" (*i.e.* in resurrection). "But every one in his own ORDER: Christ, the first-fruits; afterward (*ἔπειτα*) they that are Christ's at His coming; next (*εἶτα*) cometh the end"—when, as we learn from Rev. xx., the final resurrection occurs of those who are written in the book of life. Consequently, all who are Christ's (*i.e.* manifestly His) at the time of His appearing will rise then; whereas they who are not Christ's at His coming, but who enter His fold at or after His appearing, will not rise until the last resurrection at the end of the thousand years. If the words "first, second, third" had been used, they

could not have fixed the *order* of the resurrection more definitely than it is fixed by the words *ἀπαρχή —first-fruits*; *ἔπειτα—afterward*; and *εἶτα—then* or *next*.

Some, who have not attempted to deny that these words are equivalent to "first, second, third," yet seek to avoid the necessary conclusion (a conclusion, indeed, that would overthrow all their system), by reference to another passage in the same chapter, where we find the same words used to indicate successive periods. The passage is as follows: it speaks of the order in which *some* saw Christ after His resurrection: "He was seen of Cephas, then (*εἶτα*) of the twelve, afterward (*ἔπειτα*) he was seen by above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some have fallen asleep. Afterward (*ἔπειτα*) he was seen of James, then (*εἶτα*) of all the apostles, and last of all he was seen of me also," &c. In this passage (say they) we find the same words (*εἶτα* and *ἔπειτα*) used, and we admit that they mark order of time, but even as *all* who saw the Lord after His resurrection are not included in this passage, (for many others saw Him at periods not here referred to), so the passage respecting the order of the resurrection in verse 22 describes the order in which *some* will rise, but is not to be regarded as including *every* period of resurrection. Such is their argument, and it seems plausible; but it will not bear a moment's examination. The answer is this—the two cases

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are not parallel. In treating of the order of the resurrection, the Apostle is *avowedly* speaking of the resurrection of *all* who shall ever arise in the resurrection of life, for he distinctly prefaces his statement by these words, "So in Christ shall ALL be made alive; EVERY ONE in his own order," &c. None therefore can ever rise in the resurrection of life who are not included in the order herein mentioned. *The other passage has no such preface.* The Apostle does not profess to speak of ALL who saw the Lord; but only to tell us the order in which *some* saw Him. If he had first said that he was about to instruct us as to the order in which EVERY ONE of those who saw the Lord were permitted to behold Him, and we then found that some had seen Him at other periods and in a different order, we might well marvel. But it is not so.

There is another very important passage in which the order of the resurrection of the saints is no less clearly referred to, viz., John v. 24 to 29. The subject of this passage, as a whole, is the authority committed unto the Son by the Father, whose will is that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Accordingly, the twenty-fourth verse speaks of the quickening power connected with the word preached by the Son, personally, during His season of humiliation. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath life everlasting;

and cometh not into judgment,* but hath passed from death unto life."

But not only had the Lord Jesus the power of thus secretly and inwardly quickening the souls of those who received His word; He had power also to quicken as to the body. This is declared in the next verse: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead (*οἱ νεκροί* those dead as to the body) shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." The great period when the truth of this verse will be manifested will be that "coming hour" when He shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God, and call all His saints from their graves by His authoritative word. But at the moment He spake this verse He could truly add, "the hour now is"; for the power to quicken the bodies of His saints was even then His, and He proved this when He stood at the grave of Lazarus and "cried with a loud voice, saying, Lazarus, come forth." It was the display of the same character of power that will be manifested more widely and fully, but not more truly, at the time of "the first resurrection."

The next two verses direct our thoughts to the time of the first resurrection and to the millennial reign. "For even as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in

* Ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται ἀλλὰ μεταβέβηκεν, &c.

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himself; and hath given him authority to exercise judgment also, because he is the Son of man." It is at the commencement of the millennium that the Son, by raising His saints, will give the great manifested proof of His having life in Himself; and during the millennium He will exercise the judgment or kingly rule here spoken of, as the Son of man glorified.

But this is not all. Not only does He quicken the souls of His saints (verse 24), not only will He quicken their bodies at the time of the first resurrection (verse 25), not only will He exercise the authority of the millennial kingdom (verse 27), He will do more, He will also call ALL the dead out of their graves at the close of the millennial reign; that is, all the wicked dead of all ages and the righteous who have died in the millennium. This is taught us in the next verse, "Marvel not at this, for the hour cometh in which ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice (in the former case *some* only hear) and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of judgment." Two periods of resurrection for saints (and only two) are as plainly taught in this passage as in that we have before considered in the Corinthians.

It has been asked by some whether the word "coming" (*παρουσία*) might not have an extended meaning, so as to be prolonged over a lengthened period? But how would such prolongation suit such

passages as these?—

"As the lightning cometh out of the east, &c., so shall the COMING of the Son of man be."

"In the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his COMING."

"I was glad of the COMING of Stephanas."

"Comforted by the COMING of Titus."

"By my COMING to you again."

These passages afford examples of the sense in which the word COMING (*παρουσία*) is always used when applied to the return of the Lord. It emphatically denotes a definite and limited period, which terminates at the moment when the person spoken of ceases to be absent and *has* come. Indeed, nothing can be more clearly revealed than the inconceivable rapidity of the resurrection. So far from being prolonged, it is so momentary as to be incapable of being measured by time—"In an instant (*ἀτόμῳ*), at the twinkling of an eye, at the *last* trump." Such are the words which describe the resurrection of those "who are Christ's at his coming."

An attempt has been made by some to establish a difference between COMING (*παρουσία*) as applied to the return of our Lord, and other expressions, such as "epiphany" (*ἐπιφανεία*), or "revelation" (*ἀποκάλυψις*), which the Scriptures apply to the same event. It has been said by such that the "*coming*" of the Lord will be secret, having for its object the *secret* removal of His saints; but that His

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epiphany or revelation will be considerably subsequent, and that His saints will, at that time, be no longer on earth. This assertion, however, is altogether unfounded, and will not bear a moment's examination by the Scripture.

For, if the "*coming*" (*παρουσία*) of the Lord be secret, how is it that we find His "coming" said to be like lightning, "As the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the COMING (*παρουσία*) of the Son of man be."

Again, if we are to be removed from earth before the epiphany and revelation of the Lord, how is it that the Scriptures continually speak of us as being on the earth till then. See the following passages:

"Waiting for the REVELATION (*ἀποκάλυψιν*) of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor i. 7.)

"Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the APPEARING (*ἐπιφανείας*) of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c." (1 Tim. vi. 14.)

"And to you who are troubled, rest (*ἄνεσιν*) with us when the Lord Jesus shall be REVEALED from heaven." (2 Thess. i. 7.)

Such is the consistent testimony of the Scriptures.

It is also important to remember that there is no redemption apart from union with the person of the Son of God. All the redeemed, in whatsoever dispensation they may have lived, will rise, in virtue of their union with Christ as the Second Man—the last Adam. Christ has risen as "the first-fruits of

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those who have fallen asleep" (*τῶν κεκοιμημένων*, 1 Cor. xv.) Are not Abel, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Old Testament saints, included under the description — "those who have fallen asleep?" Is it not as true of them as of Paul, that they shall be made alive IN Christ, and bear the image of the heavenly Man, as surely as they have borne the image of the earthly? They of whom it cannot be said, "Ye are IN him that is true, even IN his Son Jesus Christ" (the word IN implying union), have no part nor lot in the new creation of God. But, however much this all-important truth may be gainsayed by many, it remains written for ever, that *all* the redeemed, however they may dispensationally vary on earth as to light, knowledge and the like, are united with Christ risen, and shall finally be changed into His likeness, so as to have thereby an essential and everlasting identity of condition paramount to all circumstantial varieties of official employment or position.

VERSE 12.

"*And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole of the moon became as blood,*" *&c.*

Such were the sights presented to the eyes of John as soon as the sixth seal was opened. The

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events indicated were unquestionably future to *him*. Are they or are they not future to *us*? Is it true (as has been so often said) that these things were all fulfilled in the days of Constantine? Was the sun then darkened and the earth shaken? If, in such passages the sun be understood to indicate (what indeed it does not) imperial power or those who hold it, was not Constantine the sun of that period? And was he darkened? Was the brilliancy of his glory obscured when he chose to make himself the patron of Christianity? Did not it (his imperial power) shine forth in greater lustre than before?

But it is not true that the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, and the shaking of heaven and earth, as described in such passages as these, mean anything else than the true literal convulsion of heaven and earth when the day of the Lord shall come. Nor is the *permissive* action of Christ in allowing false Christianity, under Satan, to glorify itself, as in the days of Constantine, to be looked on as analogous to that direct agency of His hand which will be made manifest when He shall put forth His own glorious power in order to subvert all evil, and to establish His own kingdom of righteousness and peace. The character of these two periods instead of being alike are contrasted; the agencies are different; they cannot be classed together, and are therefore incapable of being comprehended under the same descriptions in Scripture. The obstinate

perversion of the testimony of the Word of God on this and kindred subjects is fast leading on to that condition which the Prophet describes, when "The vision of all becomes as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying: Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying; Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned." If the plainest facts and the plainest Scriptures have long appealed to our consciences in vain, what wonder if judicial blindness should at last be sent? (Isa. xxix. 9-14.)

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CHAPTER IX.

On Revelation VII.

"EVERY scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, that bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." Such were the words with which the Lord Jesus finished His prophetic history of professing Christianity in the parables of the thirteenth of Matthew. The Prophets had ministered "the old things"; the Lord Jesus, whilst confirming their testimony, added also things that were "new." How greatly the admonition to neglect neither the new nor the old has been needed, is proved by the manner in which Gentile Christianity has despised the warning. The nature of the blessings promised in the latter days to Jerusalem and the earth; the doom of those proud Gentile nations which now rule the world; the necessary connection between the earth's blessing and Jerusalem's supremacy under the Messiah of Israel in His manifested glory—these and other of the ancient

promises to Israel would not have been annihilated (as amongst us they virtually have been) by the new things ministered by the Lord and His Apostles, if this admonition had been heeded. The exaltation of the Church of the first-born into heavenly places, their union with Christ risen, the future manifestation of their heavenly glory both in heaven above and in the earth below—all these and other such things, so far from being inconsistent with, are, by the appointment of God, necessary to, the destined blessing of Israel and the earth. The Temple would have been imperfect if either of its courts had been taken away. The outer and the inner were alike needful to the worship of Israel: nor will it be otherwise when, in the coming day of millennial glory, Jerusalem occupied by Israel on the earth, and "the heavenly places not made with hands" occupied by risen and glorified saints, shall respectively form the earthly and the heavenly courts in the anti-typical Temple of the great King. We may, therefore, safely say that no right order of Truth can be found in any mind that persists (as the Jews have persisted) in regarding only the earthly part of the promises made to Israel, or that ventures (as many Christians have ventured) to despise prospects in which Abraham and David and Paul rejoiced as part of their own and of their Lord's glory. Yet this last is the sin into which Gentile Christians have fallen. Before the Apostles died, they were becoming "wise in their own conceits," and had

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begun to boast themselves against the natural branches of the very tree to which they owed all their own fatness. Instead of blending the promises to Israel into harmony with the new and fuller hopes unfolded by the Lord and His Apostles, they either cast those ancient promises aside, or else, rending them from Israel, appropriated them to themselves. Impatient of suffering and reproach, they wished to reign as kings, and therefore coveted the place which Scripture has reserved for Zion and for Jerusalem when the time for the triumph and supremacy of Truth shall have come. The consequence was that Gentile Christianity soon became useless for God's purposes of practical testimony in the earth. The manifestation of the glory of the Messiah of Israel was denied; the subjugation of the earth to truth and righteousness through converted Jerusalem was forgotten; that blessed task was transferred from Israel and Israel's Messiah to ungodly nations whose symbol, as given in the Scripture, is "a beast dreadful and terrible," whose body is to be "given to the burning flame"—ignorance as to all these revealed purposes of God reigned and the light of Christendom became turned into darkness. Popery and every other form of ritualism are but the excrescences which have naturally sprung from the vitiated doctrines and vitiated practices of the period that immediately followed the death of the Apostles.

It was the union of the things "new and old" that gave such power and energy to the testimony

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and service of the apostle Paul. Indeed, whilst Christianity lingered in and around Jerusalem, and whilst the sight of "the twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night" maintained the remembrance of Jewish hopes before the very eyes of the disciples of Jesus, there was a kind of security against the ancient hopes of Israel being forgotten. Moreover, the Gentile rulers were yet standing out in marked contrariety to God, and had not yet seduced the Church into a willingness to invest them with the garments of the spouse of Christ; consequently, the promises of Israel's millennial glory were little likely to be transferred to those who were so clearly manifesting their hatred to God and to Christ. Gentile Christianity, however, has since made this transfer and is now exulting in the deed. But God has not altered the testimony of His Scripture. He has not cancelled the words of His servant Daniel, nor substituted another symbol for "the beast dreadful and terrible." He has not represented the Pagan Roman Empire by this beast and the Christianised Roman Empire by a lamb; but the symbol He chose for the beginning, that symbol He continues to the end. It is Gentile Christianity that has sought, from the days of Constantine to the present hour, to falsify the word of God, and to put the blessings of the "new things" and the glories of the old on the head of that monster which God has avowedly doomed to curse and destruction.

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Whether the late revival of prophetic light amongst us Western Christians will effect the severance of any from the general condition of Christianity, as exhibited in Christendom, remains perhaps undetermined. But this we may confidently affirm, that when Christianity is again found amidst Israel in Jerusalem, and when antichristianism has begun to draw back the kingdoms of the prophetic earth into their former place of avowed opposition to God, and when Jerusalem shall have joined the confederacy, then, if not before, the declaration of the coming of the Lord Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, and warning as to the judgments that will accompany His return, shall again form part of the testimony of Christianity in Jerusalem.

That Christianity will again exist in Jerusalem before the advent of the Lord in glory, is manifest from several parts of Scripture. Thus in our Lord's own prophecy in the twenty-fourth of Matthew, He speaks of His disciples as destined to witness in that city the great hour of antichristian triumph. "When YE" (the words were addressed to His disciples who had followed Him without the gate bearing His reproach*), "when YE shall see the abomination

* I mention this because some have confused the "YE" of the twenty-third of Matthew (last verse) with the "YE" of the twenty-fourth chapter; whereas the two bodies respectively denoted by these words stand in the most complete contrast to each other. The "YE" of the twenty-third chapter is addressed to the national representatives of Jerusalem—"Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh," &c. They who shall by

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of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet," &c., &c. He speaks of His disciples as holding fast at that period the expectation of His coming; warns them against being beguiled by deceiving rumours; speaks of that hour as one of *unequalled* tribulation, the like to which never has been nor will be, and declares *that* unequalled tribulation to be the immediate precursor of His own return in glory. "*Immediately* after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, &c." The Revelation also again and again refers to some who hold fast "the faith of Jesus" and "overcome because of the blood of the Lamb," in the midst of circumstances similar to those which the twenty-fourth of Matthew describes. Indeed, Christianity, so far as it is made the subject of prophetic record in this Book, may be almost said to be identified with these few persecuted servants of the Truth. They stand as the last representatives of the Church of the first-born on earth, just as Stephen and those who suffered with him represented it at the Pentecostal period. The character and ways of these last sufferers for Christ are,

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and by say, "Blessed," &c., are the spared remnant of Israel in Jerusalem. As soon as Jesus had pronounced these words He quitted Jerusalem, left those to whom He had spoken within its gates, and retired with His disciples to the Mount of Olives. To them He spoke, in the twenty-fourth chapter, not as representatives of Jerusalem, but of His Church. The representatives of the remnant of Israel stood *within* the gate; the representatives of the Church *without*. For further observations on Matthew xxiv. see "Aids to Prophetic Enquiry," and "The Prophecy of the Lord Jesus, etc.," as advertised at the end of this volume.

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indeed, alluded to rather than described; but enough is said to show that they are THE faithful ones of the earth at that evil hour, and in the visions of glory they are so prominently referred to, that (if it were not for other definite Scriptures) we might almost have thought that to them alone those glories would belong. The Church, however, is one, and its glory catholic. We must not, therefore, consider ourselves as dissociated from their final triumph, but see in the visions of their glory our own joy. "If one member be honoured all the members rejoice with it." "Faint not," said St. Paul, "at my tribulations for you, *which is your glory*."

It is true, indeed, that neither the twenty-fourth of Matthew, nor the Revelation, expressly teach that they who witness the final scenes therein described, and hold fast "the faith of Jesus" in them, are converts from Israel. The general tenor of the description, however, would lead us to infer that they are not Gentile Christians. Indeed, we can hardly suppose that the Jews should nationally congregate in Jerusalem again, without there being a remnant gathered out from among them into the fold of Jesus; for what hour has passed in which there has not been some remnant saved according to the election of grace? Besides, when we consider the past and present condition of Gentile Christianity, it is hardly credible that the closing testimony to Christ, in and around Jerusalem, should be entrusted to them. But however this may be,

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whether they be converts from Israel, or from the Gentiles, or from both, one thing is certain, that they will be freed from the darkness which now broods over Gentile Christianity: otherwise, they never could be rejoiced over in heaven as "overcoming because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony." That testimony will doubtless again combine the new things of the kingdom with the earthly promises to David's throne.

But however important the reference thus made in the Revelation to Christianity (and it is *most* important, for the knowledge of the relation of Christianity to the kingdoms of the prophetic earth is thus supplied, whereby we learn the great practical principles which should determine our conduct now) yet the Revelation has to do not merely with the fruits of the present dispensation, whether for good or evil. In treating of the closing hours of this dispensation, it necessarily treats of the period in which are found the seeds of the dispensation that is to follow. Those who were gathered around Jesus, as the first fruits of this present dispensation, were brought first under the ministry of John: in like manner, another voice calling to repentance in Israel shall be made the means of awakening some, who shall form the nucleus of the Lord's millennial people.

The Revelation could not complete the sad history of Jerusalem in this dispensation, unless it spake of

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some who shall testify therein, and of others whom God shall choose for preservation therein, *after* the testimony of the Gospel, as given by the disciples of Jesus, has been withdrawn. "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, &c. . . . then let them that be in Judea flee."* This is a commandment too definite and too express to be disobeyed by any who value the authority of Him who gave it. The planting of that abomination will be to the disciples of Jesus the constituted sign that the day of *their* testimony in Jerusalem is over; and they flee that they may escape that season of dire visitation from the hand of God, which shall instantly come upon the land of Israel, as soon as the idol of the great Destroyer has been established in their midst. They will see, like their Master before them, the sphere of their earthly service hopelessly closed; and will wait, in suffering and trial, for the hour, then fast approaching, of final deliverance into their heavenly rest.

If Jerusalem had not been Jerusalem, the chosen city, the mercies of God toward it would have ended here. But Israel is beloved for the fathers' sakes; and, therefore, God Himself begins to deal with them by judgments and by a testimony—the sackcloth testimony of His two witnesses, no less terrible

* For evidence as to the future establishment of idolatrous worship by Antichrist in Jerusalem, see "Aids to Prophetic Enquiry," and "Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman Empire," advertised at the end of this volume.

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than the judgments: and thus in the very hour of Jerusalem's deepest tribulation, the heart of the fathers shall be turned towards the children, and the heart of the children towards their fathers—in other words, repentance shall be wrought in some, and moral order restored, though it be but in a little remnant; and thus the foundation is laid for that new dispensation, in which the preserved of Israel shall enter on their sphere of earthly service in the kingdom below, when the Church of the first-born shall be called into their mansions of glory in the kingdom above.

The vision, therefore, of those here mentioned as sealed from among the tribes of Israel, I regard as having reference to the preserved remnant of Israel —that remnant which after having been made to pass through the fires, and refined as silver is refined, shall be made, in the millennial earth, "a strong nation." In their being sealed during the season of Israel's last woes, we find, in part, the fulfilment of that promise, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." But this vision of some preserved in the midst of the judgments which fall upon their people and their land, is succeeded by another, which leads us from earth to heaven, and reveals the final triumph of the Church of the first-born in heavenly glory before the throne.

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"A great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Such is the song of the Church of the first-born—of all those who, having "washed their garments and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," are found "Christ's at His coming." They are all described as having come out of "great tribulation." All from Abel down to the very last of those who shall "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. xiv.) during the final struggle between light and darkness under Antichrist —all will have known tribulation. The path of the patriarchs and prophets is marked in the eleventh of the Hebrews. They were those of whom the world was not worthy—"afflicted, destitute, tormented." The apostles were set forth as persons "appointed to death, made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things." John in Patmos, knowing "the tribulation, and kingdom, and endurance in Jesus," indicates the place of faithful Christianity, when the Scripture closed. They who are spoken of as "overcoming because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and not loving their life unto the death," during the coming hour of Antichrist, indicate the character of this dispensation at its close. The

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whole period of the testimony and service of the redeemed, hitherto, has been an "evil day"; and the intensity of sorrow at the end is but the amplification of what, in principle, it has ever been. The Church of the firstborn, therefore, looked at in its unity as one body, may well be spoken of in the world to come, as that which has passed through and out of great tribulation. It will be known as born out of night and sorrow and darkness—the child of tribulation, contrasted, therefore, with the saints of the millennium, who will pass unto the new heaven and new earth after an earthly season of light and joy and triumph. Accordingly, the main feature marked in this vision of glory is the fact of transition from sorrow to joy. The cause of the joy is not so much triumph over enemies or escape from conflict with the foe, as release from tribulation and the sorrows of a weary wilderness. It is transition from hunger and thirst, and the scorching of the sun, and tears, into other regions where they shall hunger no more nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. It is the heavenly Israel with the wilderness behind them, entering on the rest of the heavenly Canaan and keeping their feast of tabernacles above.

Such I conceive to be the instruction afforded in this chapter. It reveals the two great acts of God in mercy, which come in close connection with His work of judgment on the earth. The one is the preservation of a remnant in the midst of the fires;

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the other the admission into heavenly mansions of those who, because they have washed their garments and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, go out of all tribulation into the inheritance of the saints in light.

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CHAPTER X.

On Revelation VIII. and IX.

THE seventh chapter having thus supplied us with the assurance that the coming plagues should not hurt those who had the seal of God in their foreheads, and having also shown us how *all* the present flock of Jesus shall, as soon as the last tribulation has past, together rest from sorrow and crying in their heavenly fold for ever, we enter, thus instructed, upon one of the darkest scenes of judgment that the Scripture anywhere records.

The seventh seal was opened, and there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour—a silence which, to the ear of John, must have stood in strange contrast to the loud cry of the countless multitude which had just before been ascribing salvation to God and to the Lamb; in contrast also with the "voices, and lightnings, and thunderings," and sounding of the trumpets of woe which were about to follow. The half-hour, however, was not

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unemployed. The trumpets were silently given to the angels who were to sound. Another angel having a golden censer came, and silently took his stand at the golden altar, and receiving much incense, silently sprinkled it upon the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar before the throne. It was a season of still preparation for that which was about to follow. Just as when some mighty army is about to enter on the conflict—the debating of councils is over—the resolve of the commander is taken—the plans are fixed—soldiers stand in their respective positions—the word of command alone is waited for. The pause allows us time to contemplate the preparations and the order. So likewise in this vision—the hour was come; the resolve had been taken; there is a suspension of action only till the last connecting link is fitted to its place in the train of ruin.

But this period of silence in heaven had not been a period of silence on the earth. The cry of its iniquity had come up before God grievously; and the cry of His saints also had been heard imploring His righteous interference. That cry was not unheeded, yet it was not answered until the place of intercession at the altar was assumed by the angel, and sanction of the name of Christ was added to the intercession that was heard from below. Much incense was given* by the angel who held the

* Such is the right translation.

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priestly censer to the prayers of the saints, and then the answer was granted.

The character of the answer determines the nature of the petition that had been offered. The answer was this—"the angel took the censer, and filled it from the fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were thunderings, and lightnings, and voices, and earthquake." This is what we have to look for as regards the earth. Nothing was more holy than the fire upon the altar: it is the great expression of that holiness before which nature cannot stand, and which the perfectness of Christ, and that as a sacrifice, alone could satisfy. It is this searching holiness which is to be brought into contrast with the unreconciled earth and things in it. The casting into the earth fire from the altar, was, as it were, the introduction of a new element amongst human things. It brought the character and ways of God into direct collision with the character and ways of man. What the character of those ways is, must be learned from subsequent visions in this Book, for there we shall find delineations of the harlot and the beast, and Satan's glory by means of them. It is into the earth as ordered by *them* that the claim of God will come in the unsparing inquisition of His own pure holiness; and therefore we need not marvel that voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake, were the symbols that indicated to John and to us, the nature of the result that was about to follow. The

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silence in heaven was terminated thus, and the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

And here we should again remark how closely the imagery is drawn from the holy instruments of Israel's service. We have already seen the altar, the censer, the priestly intercession, and the incense, but all directed *against* Israel and the earth—all their blessings being turned into a curse. The voice of the trumpet also was once to them the happy token of security and joy. Silver trumpets were sounded by the priests, either to gather Israel in solemn assembly before the Lord; or to arouse them to the journeyings of the camp, as they moved onward towards their rest; or to be for remembrance before the Lord, that they needed when entering into the conflict His help against the enemy; or as a memorial before Him, to remind Him of the excellency of the offerings presented upon His altar "in the day of their gladness, and in their solemn days." (See Num. x.)

But now Israel's ear is no longer open to the appeals of God, and His ear also is closed towards them. We therefore read not of two silver trumpets blown in happy concord by the priests of Israel, but of a seven-fold series of successive trumpets of woe, blown by angels of God, in order to awaken against Israel and the earth, the messengers of His wrath. The earth, the sea, the fountains, with the rivers, and the heavens, are (as to the third part of each)

successively smitten; and when we consider how dependent human life is in all its arrangements and for all its joys upon these various parts of the creation of God; when we remember too that it will be the hour of nature's jubilee in the earth's fairest regions; when Carmel and Bashan and Lebanon will stand in full luxuriance of strength and beauty; and when Tyre and Jerusalem and Babylon shall be the gathering places of the wealth and glory of all nations, we may well conceive how men's hearts will fail them for fear, when they shall behold the beauty of the earth in its fairest portion wither; when the sea shall cease to supply its riches, and the hand of destruction be stretched out upon its surface; when the waters shall change their refreshment into bitterness, and the heavens in their revolution begin to minister darkness instead of light. It needs only that God should stop the course of nature and wither its powers, in order to throw all human life into confusion and bitter woe; and this, under the first four trumpets, is revealed as about to be. The two which follow lead us to other agencies more positive in their character, and more terrible in their development—agencies which operate, not so much by the withdrawal of blessings that have been given as by the positive infliction of new and strange curses, adding an unknown bitterness to the already stripped and desolate condition of human life.

The powers of darkness and the pit are under the hand of God as much as any other of His creatures,

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and He can use them just as He uses wicked men to work the counsels of His own will. I understand the locusts which issue from the abyss to be, like the heavenly cherubim, symbolic representations of a character of power with which certain living agents will be clothed. They seem to bear to the pit a relation analogous to that which the cherubim bear to heaven. The cherubim represent the power over which Christ is supreme; the power wherewith the servants of God and of Christ will be clothed for purposes of life, and glory, and blessing. The scorpion-like locusts, more complex in their shape even than the cherubim themselves, are under Apollyon as their prince, and represent, I think, the power wherewith his servants are invested, for their permitted and appointed work of hellish torment. The shapes of the locusts were like horses prepared for the battle. "Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?—the glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting."

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On the heads of these scorpion-horses were crowns of gold—emblems of their victory and triumph, for God permits them to prevail. Their having the faces of men indicates not *sympathy* (*that* is never found apart from God: Satan knows it not), but it marks such acquaintance with the feelings and circumstances of humanity as would qualify them the better for their work of torment—as would teach them where and how to inflict the wound. The long flowing hair, like the hair of women, indicates, I think, that it will be to them no task of sorrow (for the close shaven head is the token of the mourner*) but rather one of revelry and joy. Their power for destruction is marked by the teeth of lions; their immunity from harm by their breast-plates of iron; their rapidity of execution by the sound of their wings, for "the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle." Yet over all these characteristics there is one predominant feature thrown by the closing words of the description. The scorpion-character predominates. They were not sent forth to over-run or trample down as the war-horse, nor to devour as the lion, nor to consume as the locust. Their commission was not destruction, but torment. They

* See Isaiah iii. 24. "Instead of well-set hair, baldness." And Jeremiah vii. 29. "Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath." "The Lord did call to weeping and to baldness." "Poll thee, enlarge thy baldness."

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were to leave in their victims their scorpion sting. "They have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and their power in their tails was to hurt men five months." We have read of instances, from time to time, in which hellish torments of body, as well as of conscience, have seized upon dying infidels. The torments of another world have been allowed, in measure, to fall upon them here. Tormenting spirits have been permitted to put forth their power against them. Such appears to me the character of this infliction upon a nation or nations, of blaspheming infidels. It is like a foretaste of the torments of the pit, administered, I suppose, by invisible but real agents, even wicked spirits from beneath. "In those days shall men seek death, and not find it; and shall desire to die, and death fleeth from them." The Church is thus taught to know the meaning and cause of these agonies, when they come, and can anticipate and warn of them before they are brought to pass.

Yet terrible as this plague is, it is not destructive. But when the sixth angel sounded, and the angels bound at (ἐπί) the Euphrates are commanded to be loosed, we find an army, as it were, of fiends, quickly prepared under their hand for the work of destruction. We read in other parts of Scripture of legions of holy angels being employed to watch over and protect the servants of God. "When the servant of Elisha, the man of God, was risen early, and gone forth, behold an host compassed the city both with

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horses and with chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." Such is the secret ministry of holy power that silently effects the purposes of God for blessing. But here we read, not of the chariots of a heavenly host, but of horsemen with "breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and like brimstone; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by reason of the fire, and the smoke, and the brimstone, which proceed out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt." Such were their characteristics, as seen by the servant of God in heaven. The symbols are too plainly expressive to need explanation. The exact character of the power denoted by the horses and chariots of fire which compassed Elisha, by whom it was exercised, and how applied, it may be difficult to describe; but its effects were manifest. Blindness fell upon all the enemies of Elisha. So is it, I believe, in the case before us.

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The mode in which the power of this army of demons may be applied, and how far it may be independent of, or connected with secondary agency through men, I suppose no one could venture to affirm. But I see no reason to think that the power wielded by these four angels of destruction will be more manifest to the eyes of men than the horses and chariots that surrounded Elisha. But the operation of their hand will be evident from the ruin that it spreads; and faith that has received this testimony of God will be able to recognise whence it comes. The consciences of men also will bear witness to its being the work of God in vengeance; yet they repent not. "The rest of the men who were not killed by these plagues repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." Such is the manner in which the flesh ever hardens itself against the inflictions of God. We might have expected the final scene instantly to follow. But the Church is to be yet further instructed. Here, therefore, as in the sixth chapter, this vision closes, and in the next chapter a new vision begins.

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CHAPTER XI.

Notes on Revelation VII. VIII. & IX.

Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.] These words, which occur in the seventh chapter, prove its connection with the two chapters that follow; for in them the smiting of the earth, sea, and trees is described, as well as the exemption of those who were sealed for preservation. (See chap. ix. 4.) If we turn to the Old Testament prophets we find repeated descriptions of the tribulation and destructive judgments that are to fall just before the coming of the Lord upon Jerusalem and Israel, especially that part of Israel which is in the land; and these judgments are distinguished from those that are sent upon the Gentiles, even though they are inflicted at or about the same time.

A similar distinction appears to be preserved in the Revelation. The family of Israel and their land is referred to first, and the Gentiles last. The vision of the trumpets and the chapters immediately con-

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nected therewith, seem as characteristically Jewish in place and circumstances of development as the sixteenth and two following chapters are characteristically Gentile. In these last-named chapters the character of the vision is taken from the Red Sea, Pharaoh, and Egypt. Armageddon also, where the Gentiles are gathered, and Babylon, are the subjects; whereas, in the vision of the trumpets the circumstance of none being sealed except some from the tribes of Israel, the reference in chap. ix. 6 to the words of the eighth of Jeremiah, viz., that "death shall be chosen rather than life, by all the residue of this evil family," &c., and the knitting-in of the eleventh chapter (where the scene is expressly said to be Jerusalem) under the series of the trumpets (for the seventh trumpet does not sound till the end of the eleventh chapter),—all these things appear to mark these chapters as distinctively concerned with Israel. Of course I do not mean that Israel can suffer without the nations being more or less affected, or that the Gentiles can be plagued without Israel also being reached: I speak merely of the general scope of the chapters.

I regard the trumpets, therefore, as being against Israel and the land; the vials as being against Antichrist and the Gentiles: both comprised within that period marked by Daniel and by our Lord, as a time of tribulation, "such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time."

The words of the two witnesses will probably be the

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cause of many of the plagues indicated under the trumpets and the vials, for it is said that they have "power to smite the earth with every plague as often as they will." (Ch. xi. 6).

"*Till we have sealed the servants of our God.*"] The history of the Jewish remnant is a wide but interesting and important subject. A sense of the wickedness of Antichrist and the antichristian Jews, and of the darkness and desertion of Israel, are among the first symptoms of their souls being dealt with by God. At this time, however, their words, as gathered from the Psalms, imply much ignorance of their sin, and much self-confidence and self-righteousness. After the abomination of desolation has been set, and the unequalled season of tribulation commenced, they appear to become gradually humbled and at last (under the testimony probably of the witnesses) thoroughly broken—conscious of the truth respecting the past, and correctly anticipating the future, expecting the return of the Lord Jesus, assured of preservation through the fires that will burn against Israel, and of subsequent blessing —but not as yet sprinkled with the blood of reconciliation, nor possessed of the spirit of peace. Yet they will cry and sigh for all the abominations; their name will be hated and cast out as evil; and the goodness of God, both in Isaiah and here, owns them as His servants. The condition of the disciples of John the Baptist before they were brought to

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Jesus may be referred to as more nearly illustrative of the condition of this remnant before the manifestation of the Lord, than any other. Repentance, moral order (see Luke iii. 10), and knowledge of coming events, was all that John could lead them to, till they were brought to Jesus.

"*Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees etc.*"] This, as I have already said, connects the seventh chapter with that which follows it, for there we find the earth, sea, and trees smitten. I doubt not that these several parts of nature will be literally smitten, in indication that the hand of God is stretched out against all the natural blessings which He has hitherto so bountifully given, even to the unthankful and to the evil. Israel has worshipped natural things and forgotten God, and on the subjects of their idolatry His hand will fall. The rivers and fountains of waters are mentioned afterward as parts of the earth that are smitten. I do not regard these as emblems of spiritual blessings. The streams of truth have *never* flowed yet so as to be received either by Israel or the world. As to this, the Church has been as a "spring shut up, a fountain sealed." A flowing river which men have *used and valued* (and this is the emblem here, for men are sensible of its being a plague when the rivers, &c. are smitten) such an emblem can never be used to represent the relation of Truth to the world at present, for Truth is not to them as a

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flowing stream. Such emblems may suit the millennium, but not the present age. The two great subjects of the Revelation as to judgments sent upon *things* are, the gifts of God in creation, and the artificial constructions of man. The trumpets of the eighth chapter lead us to the first—subsequent chapters to the last. Nature and art are the two great pillars—the Jachin and Boaz of the human system.

"*An hundred and forty-four thousand.*"] I regard this as a number indicative of completeness. Many of the numbers appear to have a kind of symbolic meaning attached to them in many parts of Scripture. *Two* represents concord and companionship. "Two are better than one: if they fall, the one will help up his fellow." "If one prevail against him, two shall withstand." The disciples were sent out "two and two." Animals are placed by twos under the yoke.

Three indicates completeness in the way of repetition, and is applied to any action or course of conduct that has been *sufficiently* repeated. "Three times in the year Israel appeared before the Lord." "Thou hast smitten me these three times." "Thou hast mocked me these three times." "David arose, and bowed three times." "Solomon offered three times a year." "Elijah stretched himself on the child three times." "David kneeled on his knees three times a day." "This was done three times, and the sheet was drawn up again into heaven."

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Four, being two multiplied into itself, represents perfectness of combination. Thus when perfectness of concurrent operation is mentioned, we find *four* angels on the *four* corners of the earth, holding the four winds. The square or the cube represents the greatest perfectness of combination that can be found in form. The altar was four square; the breast-plate four square; the court of the Temple four square; the holy oblation four square; the heavenly city four square every way, or a perfect cube. Τετράγωνος ἄνευ ψόγου (a faultless cube) was an expression used among the Greeks to represent a person whose character was supposed to *combine* the various qualities of moral excellence. (*Arist. Ethics.* I. x. 11.)

Seven is the number of rest, especially after labour. It indicates completeness that can be rested in; the mind in this case being directed, not to any consequences that may follow, but simply to the completeness and perfectness of that which is presented before us. The seventh day, the seventh year, and the seventh seventh year, were periods of rest and satisfied joy. The candlestick had seven lamps. "Prepare me seven bullocks, and seven rams." Indeed *seven* may properly be called *the* number of completeness. When man by his sin ruins that which God had made perfect, and it becomes necessary for Him to make all things new, then we read of an *eighth* day.

Twelve is the number employed when agency is

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spoken of, intended to act instrumentally on others. The mind is directed, not as by seven to the finished completeness of the object presented, but rather to the results that are to be produced by or through it. Agency towards others in blessing is specially the character of the heavenly city, and consequently the number *twelve* is again and again connected with it. Its provisions of blessedness are not intended to end within itself. The patriarchs, from whom the tribes were to spring, are twelve; the apostles, who were to gather and form the Church, are twelve; the tribes, through whom will be brought to bear upon mankind the earthly agency whereby the nations will be blessed, are twelve.

Such agency, if prospered, necessarily acts in the way of accumulation, and is capable of producing other agency similar to itself. Hence, I think, the number 144,000—twelve multiplied into itself—would be applied where the persons spoken of are at once the result of instrumental agency, and are suited for similar agency themselves. Combination and multiplication of blessing is a happy principle in the hand of God.

The application of numbers thus used to denote completeness, does not imply the identity of the persons or things to which they may be applied. The 144,000 of this chapter, are clearly to be distinguished from the 144,000 seen upon the Mount *Zion* around the Lamb. The omission of the article in the fourteenth chapter, would be in itself sufficient

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to show that they were not the same company. We do not find 'AI ἑκατὸν τεσσεράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες yet there is a resemblance between the two, for the first are an earthly—the second a heavenly company: both prepared for the purposes of God touching the earth—the one, His earthly: the other, His heavenly agents.

"*After these things I saw, and lo, a great multitude,*" &c.] We might expect to find, as we here do, a record of God's two acts of mercy at the period of His final judgments: one in preserving a remnant in the earth, the other in taking all who have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" into their heavenly rest.

I have before alluded to the variety of symbols that are needed to give us any notion of the varied glories and office of the Church. In the fifth chapter we find the elders and the cherubim saying, "Thou hast redeemed us out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation." In this chapter we find it said, that the countless multitude are gathered "out of every nation, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues." Here, then, we find the same body symbolized in two very different positions. We find the same thing in the fourteenth chapter, only there they are represented on Zion in their earthly service —here in their heavenly. None but apparently contradictory symbols can explain the fulness of the Church's blessings. Even Christ, who is one

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with Him that sitteth on the throne, will serve and praise before it.

"*And the first angel sounded*," &c.] The instruments of the divine action, as detailed in the two following chapters, appear to be as follows :—

I.—The application of the destructive powers of nature in their ordinary way. The vision of fire, hail, &c., is symbolic of the application of God's destructive power against the pleasantness and beauty of the earth in a manner to which men have been frequently accustomed. I speak of the manner, not of the degree. Blood mingled with the hail shows its destructiveness unto death.

II.—The alteration of the ordinary course of nature by bringing the elements into collision in a manner as yet unknown ; symbolized in the vision by a burning mass like a mountain of fire cast into the sea.

III.—The bringing superhuman agency, now operating in another sphere and subserving the arrangements of the divine order in the created heavens, into destructive application to the earth.

IV.—The withdrawal of blessings heretofore ministered through the heavens.

V. and VI.—Hellish and superhuman agents, capable of employing an infinite number of subordinate agencies under them. These are directed, not against the earth, but upon men themselves.

The third of these divisions is symbolized by a

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star falling from heaven to the earth. Stars appear to be used in Scripture to symbolize beings who exercise a superintending control over the things of earth, from an unearthly and superhuman sphere above. Thus they are continually employed to represent the saints in their resurrection glory, when, as during the millennium, they will rule over the world. At present, however, evil spirits, as well as holy angels, are allowed to act in this high sphere, controlled, of course, by Him who has the seven Spirits of God, and ultimately subserving the purposes of His will. Thus we read of the prince of the power, or authority, of the air; of "the host of the high ones that are on high" (Isa. xxiv. 21); of the angel connected with Persia, resisting the angel of God. We cannot doubt that such evil angels are often employed by God to guide the hurricane, or the earthquake, in their appointed course of destruction; as when the lightnings and the winds brought destruction on Job's household. What occupancy such evil ones may have in the created heavens above, it is not for us to inquire, because God has not revealed it. We know that all that is described in Genesis, as created for and with this earth, is brought, more or less, in subjection to the power of evil. In the case before us, an evil power from above, symbolized by a star falling to the earth, becomes connected solely with this earth in order to bring bitterness and death into its waters.

It will be observed how frequently "the third

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part" is mentioned in these chapters. The precise extent of this expression will, of course, be determined by the sphere spoken of—whether that sphere be considered to be the land of Israel, or be extended to the prophetic earth generally. The "host of the high ones that are on high," is a name that continues to belong to evil spirits, until the time that they, and the great ones of the earth, are together punished. The exclusion of Satan from access to the presence of God in heaven as the accuser of the brethren (Rev. xii.) must be carefully distinguished from his ceasing to be "the prince of the power of the air." (Eph. ii). He will not lose this latter branch of his power until he is bound.

"*And I saw, and heard an eagle flying*," *&c.*] This is the correct reading. An eagle is frequently connected with the exercise of divine judgments. Thus in Hosea viii.: "Set the trumpet to thy mouth: he shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law."

"*Loose the four angels that have been bound at the great river Euphrates.*"] I understand that the angels here spoken of are literally angels; that they are really imprisoned; and that the Euphrates means the Euphrates. We read in Jude of there being other angels "reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Why these are bound at the Euphrates, or how, it is not for us to say. But when Babylon and the

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Euphrates shall have again become the highway and centre of the world's greatness, faith will have to remember that in the midst of all the splendour of the pageant scene, there are unseen angels bound, and only waiting for the hour of being unloosed in vengeance.

"*Having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and like unto brimstone.*"] The jacinth was of a deep blue colour, similar to the blue which we see in flame or burning brimstone. The blue flame of the pit is indeed a widely different thought from the blue of heaven: but it is the result of the holiness of the same God—the one seen in brightness and serenity; the other in darkness and destruction. As connected with these horsemen it is, of course, the blue of the pit. Their "breastplates were of fire, jacinth, and brimstone." Heavenly blue was seen in the breastplate and robes of the priest of Israel—their names shining there on the stones of memorial. But now all this was gone, and these breastplates from the pit flamed against them.

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CHAPTER XII.

On Revelation X.

WE are now arrived at a part of the Revelation in which the scene becomes more narrow, and the descriptions more definite, than in any of the chapters that we have hitherto considered. The sixth chapter was, as we have seen, wide and comprehensive; the eighth and ninth chapters, though in some degree more definite, yet do not distinctly specify either place or time. But in the eleventh and two following chapters (to all of which the tenth may be considered as a preface) we find the descriptions more minute, and the limitations more marked, both as to the places, time, and persons spoken of.

The special subject of these three chapters, x., xi., and xii., is the period which immediately precedes that hour in which the Lord "takes to himself his great power and reigneth," the sovereignty of the world having become His:—a period during which the power of the devil, through man, is allowed to be

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paramount in the earth; "the sea, and the dry land, and the strength of the hills," appearing to be fast and finally held in the grasp of the great enemy: Jerusalem and the nations of the prophetic earth being alike mad in blasphemy; drunk with the wine first mingled by the harlot, and finally ministered through the beast.

But before we have the description of the earth thus ruled over by evil, we find in the tenth chapter a vision telling us of that hour when One mightier than Satan will come in the glory of Almighty power, and plant His foot upon this ruined earth, and claim it for His own. "I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; and having in his hand a little roll opened; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and the left on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, even as when a lion roareth." Here, as in the seventh chapter, we find an angel used in the vision to symbolize the Lord of glory. A cloud (the angel was clothed with a cloud) is the emblem of divine majesty. In a cloud God led Israel out of Egypt. In a cloud He had dwelt in their Tabernacle above the cherubim of glory. In clouds He will again come at that future hour of which it is said, "He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies." (Ps. xviii.) The rainbow which had before been seen

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encircling the throne of the divine majesty in the heavens was here seen around His head; for He will come to bring the earth under the effectual power of that covenant, whose results are now hindered because of the wicked who "destroy the earth." "His face also was, as it were, the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." Here are similar attributes to those which mark His relation to the Churches in the first chapter; but now the earth is the object, not the Churches. A time is coming when He will be as the sun even towards this earth. The earth needs the light of His countenance. It needs the rise of the Sun of righteousness; and when the time comes for this vision to be fulfilled, as the Sun of righteousness He will arise with healing in His wings. Bright and blessed will be the rise of that morning without clouds—the result shall be joy and gladness. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Nevertheless, He cannot tread this earth save in the pure power of holiness. His feet are ever as fire, and here they were seen as pillars of fire; for His stand, when once it shall have been assumed, shall be one of everlasting firmness never to be shaken. His visitation must be the visitation of holiness; the unprepared earth must hear His voice in judgment; it will tremble and be still. "He set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth."

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The Church knows by faith the power of this coming hour: and in the strength of this knowledge has to watch, testify, and endure many days. The light of this vision, to the eye of faith, shines over and through the darkness which the following chapters reveal. We know the proud display of Satan's coming greatness in the earth, and see its strength already gathering: but we also know the manner of the interference of our God. We know that Jesus has a title to all things in earth, as well as heaven, and we own Him as the earth's rightful Lord—the Lion of Judah "who shall cry, yea roar, and prevail against his enemies." If the time had come for this vision to be actually fulfilled —if He who shall come, had come, and really taken possession of the things below, we should not have found the voices of the seven thunders concealed: for His cry was followed by the voices of seven thunders: "When he had cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had spoken, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up those things which the seven thunders had spoken, and write them not." When the time comes for the saints to know even as they are known, they will themselves be in the secret place of thunder, and will have communion with the ways of the Most High, even in His judgments, and the terrors of His almighty power. But, at present, we are not to know the voice of the thunders, but only the instruction of the

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little book which was *open* in the hand of the angel. Just as in the fourth chapter, the vision of the throne, although the pledge and evidence of our coming glory, yet for the present communicates no gift, save only the roll of sorrowful instruction; so is it also here. The bright vision of the angel is the witness of our future glory together with the Lord, but its present result is only the communication of a book in which sorrow is. "The voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the little roll which is opened in the hand of the angel." It was a *little* roll, and accordingly we shall find that the instruction which follows is greatly limited, both as to time and circumstances. It becomes, consequently, easy to be grasped, or incorporated, as it were, into the soul's knowledge, and so may well be symbolized by a book eaten. The angel said unto me, "Take and eat it up, and it shall make thy belly bitter." It was "as sweet honey" to the taste, for all knowledge which God communicates to His saints is in itself pleasant; but in its results it is bitter; for all knowledge that so acts upon the soul as necessarily to place it in sorrowful testimony "against peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" cannot be otherwise than bitter to the heart of man. So was it with Him who had "his ear opened morning by morning to hear as the learned"; and so will it be with all those who, after being instructed in heaven, are sent to digest and use that knowledge in the

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midst of a ruined and transgressing world. Jesus was One who had been in the bosom of the Father before the world was—He had clothed the heavens with blackness, and made sackcloth their covering; yet we find Him in the place of suffering testimony, feeding on the truths of God; and prophesying only to be rejected. So also is it with the Church. In Christ we see it exalted and seated in heavenly places; but as known here, as represented by John in Patmos, it is still in the place of sorrowing service, learning bitter things, and prophesying to be rejected. The instruction is heavenly, but the effect is earthly:—"He said unto me, Thou must prophesy again, *against* many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

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CHAPTER XIII.

On Revelation XI.

THERE are two cities (and in cities we find the expression of the moral character of man)—there are two cities around which the activities and interests of the world will be concentrated just at its closing hour; and those cities are Babylon and Jerusalem. The secular greatness of men, the refinements of luxury, and the splendour of sovereign rule will be found in chief abundance in the first; but religious associations, and the design of Satan to glorify himself in the very place that God has chosen to set His name there, will give to the latter attractions no less seductive, and pretensions perhaps more arrogantly wicked.

The interests of men are being already awakened towards Jerusalem. Civilization is already commencing in that city, and in the land of Israel, a work which the self-interest of politicians and the energy of her own returning people will finally mature. The restoration of Jerusalem and the East will soon attract the interests of the world. It is

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a sorrowful and bitter thing to stand alone, as it were, in the midst of the busy throng, joined as it is by many of the true children of the kingdom, and proclaim that that which they are so eager to restore is, by God, "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt"; that the re-gathering of Israel in Jerusalem is but the result of the restless energy of that unclean spirit, which after having long wandered, seeking rest and finding none, is about to return with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and dwell in that miserable race who are about to re-people Jerusalem.

The chapter before us supplies us with the history of Jerusalem during the period which immediately precedes its final visitation by the Lord in glory. When the 1260 days of sackcloth testimony terminate, the seventh angel sounds; and when he sounds, the strange mysterious dealing of the hand of God, which has so long delayed the blessings promised to and by His prophets, and allowed clouds of darkness from the pit to settle in upon that city where light, and joy, and peace, should be visible before the eyes of all nations—this mystery of God will terminate, and other scenes open, that shall be enveloped in mystery no longer. In reading this chapter, therefore, we must imagine Jerusalem again restored to seeming dignity and greatness: its Temple re-built; its worship re-established; itself become a centre for the busy concourse of many nations; her own people resting under the shadow of the great chief

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of the Gentiles, who, for a little season, practises on them by his flatteries, and then suddenly grasps them for destruction. During the whole period of the smoothness and deceit of Antichrist, Christians and Christian testimony remain in Jerusalem. The message of the gospel, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved," will still be sounded in the ears of that disobeying and gainsaying people. But when the last period arrives, and the 1260 days of Antichrist's supremacy commence by the planting of the idol of the desolator, we find Christianity, not indeed extinguished in the earth, but withdrawn from Judah and Jerusalem, and Israel left to fall alike beneath the power of the great destroyer and the superadded inflictions of the wrath of God; "for then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (Matt. xxiv. 21.)

This, however, is the hour which God has selected for the mission of a new character of testimony into that most evil, yet beloved city. "I will endow my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth." It will be like the cry of Jonah in Nineveh, a cry of woe and of judgment. The witnesses will be able to turn back the thoughts over the whole course of Israel's evil history; they will be able to speak of the law broken—of restoration granted, only to be forfeited again by aggravated transgression—of prophets sent to be rejected—of the

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Son of God slain and hanged on a tree — of the message of forgiveness through His blood despised, and now withdrawn—of the day of His glory with all its judgments being nigh, even at the doors—of the summer being past, the harvest ended, and they not gathered.

Such will be the primary character of the testimony of the Witnesses. They will speak of judgment, not of grace—of destruction, not of salvation.* The rage of blaspheming infidels, more hardened than Pharaoh, and more wicked than Ahab and Jezebel, will be around them. But they cannot be overthrown, neither can their testimony be stayed, until their course is fully run; for power from God for protection will visibly be granted to them. Fire will wait upon the word of their lips, and will consume their enemies. They will have power also to turn the waters into blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.

We can easily conceive how strangely such a testimony will sound in the ears of the great Pharaoh of the earth, just at the very moment when he is exalted into the plenitude of his glorious power, and how he will meet it in hatred and scorn. The apostates of Israel, like so many Ahabs, will scorn it likewise, though perhaps they may in secret tremble; but Satan's seven-fold power will be upon them, and they will hate it the more, because they believe it to

* I am speaking now of the character of their public testimony. See Notes at the end of this chapter.

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be of God: and thus when these servants of God shall have finished their testimony, the wickedness of earth will again, though for the last time, be allowed to lift itself up and prosper. "When they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war with them, and shall overcome them, and kill them."

That the Witnesses are two individuals is as certain as that Antichrist is an individual. Their miracles are those of Moses and Elijah, and this, together with the promise in Malachi, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord"; the declaration of John the Baptist, that he was not Elijah;—his mission being described as being "in the spirit and power of Elijah;" the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration; the translation of Elijah in an unchanged body, and the remarkable peculiarities connected with the body of Moses, these, and other such circumstances, have led many to believe that they are the two servants selected for this last place of sorrowful and dishonoured testimony—as also destined to stand hereafter as "the two anointed ones" by the side of "the Lord of the whole earth." But, however this may be, whether they be Moses and Elijah, or no, it is certain that their testimony and service will be, in its character, that of Moses and Elijah. The matured vigour of man's natural energies, his in-

tellect and his skill, assisted by all that he has been able to borrow from the various revelations of God's truth, and even from Christianity itself, will soon present the nations of the Roman World, with Jerusalem in their midst, as one vast Egypt; and it was in Egypt, when the maturity of its iniquity had been reached, that Moses stood. The Egyptians were learned and wise, unrivalled amidst the nations of the earth. But their wisdom and their learning were apart from God. Their country was unequalled in its resources. What river was like unto their river? But they said, "their river was their own." They held this likewise apart from God. Joseph also and Israel had been there; and what would Pharaoh and Egypt have been without Joseph and Israel? Through them they had builded up their greatness, but still apart from God, and therefore all ended in a proud and impious defiance of His will. But yet Pharaoh and Egypt were never chargeable with the direct guilt of apostasy; such apostasy, I mean, as was found in Israel when Elijah stood forth among them, because they had forsaken God and consented to bow down and worship Baal. It was before the king of *Egypt* that Moses stood: but Elijah was in the midst of *corrupted Israel.* Their sin was deeper and more debased, though it lacked the energy of the sin of Egypt. But combine the two, and nothing will be wanting; and it is these two characters of evil that will be combined in Jerusalem. The great head of the Gentiles who

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will glorify himself in Jerusalem, will be alike the centre of the godless energy of nature, and of the corruptions of apostasy. He will be Pharaoh and Ahab in one person; and those who are around him, whether Jews or Gentiles, will be like their king. The witnesses of God will testify in the midst of them, but their testimony will be in vain. They will complete their testimony and fall. For three days and a half their bodies shall lie unburied in the street of that same city in which "their (*αὐτῶν*) Lord was crucified," and they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and shall send gifts one to another. But it will be the world's last jubilee, for the hour will have come for the Lord to arise to judgment, and to help all the meek of the earth. He will put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and clothe Himself with zeal as with a cloak.

The three days and a half during which the Witnesses lie silent in death, is a period of death-like stillness touching all agency from God. His hand appears to be driven from the earth, and the cry of exulting blasphemy is all that is heard amongst the men who have so lately witnessed the greatness of its power. Testimony ceases on the earth, but power does not cease to dwell in heaven. It is in heaven that thrones of judgment will be set, and the Ancient of days will sit, His "garment white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne like the fiery flame, and his wheels as

burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."

The time has come for the Son to quit the throne of the Father, and to be brought before the earth's Almighty Judge, and to be invested with the power —the long delegated power, which now is finally taken from the hands of man. The times of the Gentiles finish, and with them the mystery of God.

Whether this scene—this secret scene in heaven, takes place during, or at the close of, the three days and a half of man's triumphant revelry, I do not say. One thing is certain, that when the seventh trumpet sounds, this scene has past in heaven; for "there were heard great voices in heaven saying, The sovereignty of the world hath become the sovereignty of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." In heaven the day of Christ thus begins.

The seventh trumpet awakened this song of praise in heaven, but on earth it was a trumpet of woe, the last and greatest of the three trumpets of woe. "Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell upon the earth, by reason of the rest of the voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are about to sound!" The seventh is the last of these three trumpets, and will bring alike upon Israel and on the Gentiles, the final blow, administered by the

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Son of man Himself, returning in the glory of His power. But the time for revealing the manner of this was not yet come. Here, therefore, as in previous chapters, the vision closes, and a new vision begins.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Notes on Revelation X. and XI.

VERSE 7.

"There should be no longer delay; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he should be about to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath evangelized (given glad tidings to) his servants, the prophets."] God's servants, the prophets, had to behold (and it was to them a sight of sorrow and anguish—see Jeremiah and Daniel) the light of joy and blessing that had once rested on Israel, withdrawn, and succeeded by a darkness which has gone on steadily increasing, until it shall at last end in the black night of Antichristian apostasy. The stream of blessing has disappeared, like a lost river that suddenly entering some deep chasm hides itself beneath the earth's surface and there pursues its secret way, until in some far distant region, separated by vast and burning deserts, it suddenly re-appears. The mystery here spoken of commenced when the stream of Israel's blessing vanished; it will terminate when it re-appears.

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During the progression of this "mystery of God," the children of faith are made acquainted with many "mysteries" which are, by God's appointment, necessary to the development of the great end. Thus, the blindness which has fallen on Israel in part, *until* all the appointed number that are to be gathered from the Gentiles by the gospel as now preached, have been gathered, is a mystery which we understand. Another mystery (of which the great Apostle to the Gentiles was the especial minister) is the calling of the Gentiles who are now converted, into strict fellowship with believing Israelites "*as fellow-heirs and of the same body*" with them in Christ risen. Another mystery now revealed is the union of all believers with Christ in heavenly places—and again that Christ is IN His people here, even though they be Gentiles—"Christ IN you (Colossian Gentiles) the hope of glory."

It should carefully be remembered (though strong assertions have been made to the contrary) that neither the "Church of the first-born," nor the Church in its totality, is called by St. Paul "the mystery," nor "a mystery," nor any thing equivalent thereunto; although many things connected with the Church's calling and position are called mysteries —see the examples just given.

The Church as known in eternity will be composed, not of part of the redeemed, but of *all* the redeemed of every dispensation. Abel, Abraham, David, Paul, and the millennial saints will finally

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form part of the one redeemed body in the new creation. Dispensational differences of light and knowledge, however important here, must not be transferred into heaven, so as there to separate those whom God has indissolubly united in the unity of Christ risen. Every saint who has borne the image of the first man who was earthly, shall equally bear the image of the Second Man who is heavenly, and therefore being all equally like Christ, shall have like powers, like understanding, like knowledge, like affections; and shall be equally near in love to the Father and to the Son. These things depend, not on what we are in the Spirit here (that would indeed alter the very ground of salvation)—they depend simply and only on what Christ is. They are the gift of God *in His Son.*

[That which had been *stated* in the Old Testament Scriptures, but which had been allowed to remain there, as it were, silent, without being unfolded and explained, is called by St. Paul, "a mystery." Thus we find him saying in Rom. xvi. 25—"Now to him that is able to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept silent since the world began, but now made manifest, and by means of the prophetic Scriptures made known, &c." (διά τε γραφῶν προφητικῶν γνωρισθέντος.) That which was not IN the prophetic Scriptures, could not have been made known *by means of them.* "A mystery," therefore, is not necessarily a *fresh* truth, *i.e.*, a truth never before stated. To *state* a mystery is something different from *unfolding* it. The

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first was done by the prophets, the latter by the apostles.

The apostle Paul continually referred to the Old Testament Scriptures in confirmation of that which he ministered. See for example Rom. i. 1. "Separated unto the gospel of God *which he had promised afore by his prophets* in the holy Scriptures;" and again, "but now the righteousness of God apart from the law is manifested, *being witnessed by the law and the prophets.*" Nothing can be more strict than the unity of testimony that is found in the writings of the prophets and the apostles. Peter distinctly says that the prophets "prophesied of the grace that should come unto us;" though they were not allowed to fathom, and become the ministers of, that which they prophetically declared.

Nothing can be more untrue than to say, that New Testament prophets were empowered to write Scripture. Prophets, in the New Testament sense of that word, had a subordinate ministry; being such as spoke "to edification, exhortation, and comfort," but not infallibly, seeing that their fellow-prophets were directed "to judge" their ministry. (1 Cor. xiv. 29.) But they were not inspired to write Scripture, and therefore the words "prophetic Scriptures," cannot apply (as some have said) to their writings, which indeed do not exist.]

"*Arise, and measure the sanctuary of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein: but the court that is without the sanctuary leave out and measure it not,*" &c.] It should be observed that the word which I have here translated *sanctuary*, is *ναός*, not *ἱερόν*. The latter denotes the whole sacred inclosure, and is commonly translated "temple"; whereas the former, *ναός*, which is here used, signifies the inner courts

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only, *i.e.* the holy place and the holy of holies. The altar here mentioned is the altar of incense in the holy place. The two inner courts, into which priests alone could enter, are typical of those heavenly places not made with hands into which Jesus has already gone. The two *inner* courts and they that worship therein, are therefore used to symbolize those who worship in the name of Jesus; whereas the *outer* court and those that worship there, represent those who seek to maintain their standing as Israelites, and reject Jesus. The inner courts represent the place and service of the Church; the outer courts symbolize Jerusalem and her rejected people. Accordingly, the inner courts and those who worship there were alone "measured." "Measuring" is the sign of appropriation. We measure that which we claim or recognise as our own. The Temple, as seen in the vision, was, of course, symbolic; quite as much so as the seven candlesticks which represented the seven Churches.

The period at which Christian worship is to be thus *owned*, and Jewish worship to be thus *disowned*, in Jerusalem, is that which immediately ushers in the last 1260 days of Jewish tribulation. Many, when they see Jewish worship restored in Jerusalem by the Jews returning in unbelief, will be disposed to say (indeed they have already said it) that God will favour the attempt, and accept the worship. This verse alone might have taught them that He will give it up to the fury of the enemy, who shall

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take away the daily sacrifice and plant the abomination that maketh desolate and shall tread down Jerusalem and her people. As to Christian worship it will be owned and continued. It may, indeed, be driven from Jerusalem and Judea, but it is not dependent on an outward temple, nor any outward circumstances. It can live in deserts, or mountains, or dens, or caves of the earth.

"*The holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months, and I will endow my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy* 1260 *days*," &c.] I suppose no one will deny the identity of the forty-two months and the 1260 days in this passage. Its being said that the Gentiles tread Jerusalem down for the definite period of forty-two months, proves that they do not tread it down after this definite period is over. Consequently the sackcloth testimony of the Witnesses, and the reign of Antichrist in Jerusalem, must end simultaneously.

The three days and a half, during which the Witnesses lie dead, must be included in the general period of their testimony; just as if speaking in general terms of our Lord's sojourn on earth, we should include the whole period from His birth to His ascension, and not except the three days during which He was in death. Indeed, this is proved to be so, by the identity of the forty-two months of Jerusalem's subjection to the Gentiles and the 1260 days of the Witnesses' testimony, as already shown;

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for no one will say that the period of exultation over the bodies of the two Witnesses can be *after* Jerusalem has ceased to be trodden down.

That the Witnesses are to be two individuals who shall testify in Jerusalem during the reign of Antichrist, was taught by a succession of writers from the first to the twelfth century. See quotations in "Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman Empire," pp. 237 etc. *first ed.*, or 372 etc. *second ed.*

"*These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks that stand before the Lord of the earth.*"] This is an evident reference to Zechariah iv. It is a remarkable instance of the manner in which titles or offices of glory which at present can attach to the saints only *prospectively*, are ascribed to them now. Thus in Daniel vii. and viii., the suffering saints are prospectively called "saints of the high places"—"stars," and "host of the heavens," even during the time of their deepest sorrow and degradation. Nothing can be more contrasted than the place of the persecuted and dishonoured Witnesses, and that of the olive trees as described in Zechariah, standing by the side of the Lord of the whole earth. Yet such is to be the place of the Witnesses in the glory; and faith knows this and will recognise it during the time of their sackcloth testimony.

The petition of the mother of James and John was doubtless founded on this passage in Zechariah. She with the rest of the disciples expected that the

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kingdom of God would immediately appear. She had seen her two sons stand by the side of the Lord during the time of His humiliation, and she hoped that they might be the persons who should stand the one on His right hand, the other on His left, when He should be manifested in His glory. Hence her petition. It was no ordinary faith to own Jesus of Nazareth as one who could grant such a request. She was not rebuked; but told merely that this place of honour could not be given except to those for whom it was prepared of the Father.

"*Which stand* (ἑστῶτες)* *before the Lord of the earth.*"] It is important to notice both in Greek and in Hebrew the use of the present participle in denoting abstract relation. The witnesses whilst prophesying in sackcloth, will not be actually standing as olive trees, according to the vision of Zechariah, before the Lord of the whole earth. Nevertheless, their designation for that place in glory being fixed by the unalterable appointment of God, they are spoken of, abstractedly from time, as being in possession thereof. For further remarks on the use of the present participle in this abstract

* In Greek the perfect middle is sometimes used in the same way as in the present instance. Ἑστῶτες has been by some mistaken for the perfect active, but this is a grammatical error. The perfect active is ἑστηκα, and means "*I have set*"; the perfect middle is ἑσταα, and means "I stand," perf. m. ἑσταα, perf. part. m. ἑσταως, cont. ἑστῶς, pl. ἑσταοτες, cont. ἑστῶτες.

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sense, see the notes at the end of the seventeenth chapter.

"*And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies.*"] This would be a character of power ill-suited to those who were sent to "preach the gospel of peace," but well adapted to that awful character of testimony which the Witnesses will be sent to bear after the gospel has been withdrawn from Jerusalem. They will be able to lay bare all truth before the consciences of men, without being commissioned to preach forgiveness of sins. Peter might have said all that he did say when they that heard him were pricked at the heart, and yet might not have been permitted to add the message of pardon through the blood of the Lamb. We have heard of infidels who have on their death-beds been convinced of the truth about Jesus, without being allowed to believe.

The testimony of the Witnesses, therefore, may be regarded in two aspects; first, in its wide and general character as addressed to the infidel multitudes around them; and secondly, as to the more secret instruction given to the few who may tremble and bow before their word. In neither case, however, will they preach the present remission of sins. As regards the first, it will be exclusively a testimony to the coming of the Lord in judgment, and an exhibition of the past and present sin that causes that judgment to fall. But if any be humbled,

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and say, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—the witnesses will no longer be able to say what Peter said, "Repent, and be baptised for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"; neither will they be able to promise *deliverance from* the coming fires, though they may promise *protection through* them, and acceptance in Jesus after He shall have returned and removed ungodliness from Jacob. Such anticipation of the future, founded on the word of others, is something very different from present faith and joy in the Spirit. The Spirit is not poured out from on high, until after the Lord Jesus has returned. Accordingly, I do not find the strongest expressions that are used in the Psalms as belonging to this remnant, going beyond the expression of hope for the future. There is no expression of *present rest* in God, during their season of oppression and distress—no ability to say, what they who have the Spirit of Jesus can say, "The Lord is *my* shepherd, I shall not want; he maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters." This draws a strong line of distinction between the Psalms which pertain to the Christian remnant, and the remnant preserved in Israel, who go, in the power of expected blessing, through the fires.

After the Lord has come and finally delivered them, and they have been enabled to believe, some time elapses before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them, and the nation. During all this

period the Psalms ascribed to them express great imperfectness of knowledge, especially as regards redemption. Like Paul after he had believed, they will remain in much darkness until the unction from on high is given. During this time the Lord appears to have retired to heaven with His risen saints, and to leave them for a season as a mourning but forgiven remnant, in the midst of the desolations that His hand will have wrought.

It should be observed also, that the history of the remnant spared amidst that part of Israel which is scattered up and down throughout the earth, is, in many respects, circumstantially different from that of the remnant spared in the land.

The ministry of the Witnesses, therefore, is of a character entirely peculiar. No previous ministry that has been sent to Jerusalem, not even that of John the Baptist, which is most nearly analogous, is like it. The instructions of John were able to bring into distinct deliverance from the judgments of which he warned; but it will be otherwise with the remnant of Israel. They will have to pass through the fires to be refined as silver is refined, and to be tried as gold is tried.

"*The great city, which is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt.*"] These words should be well considered by every saint who is being involved in any of the present schemes for reviving Jerusalem. I do not say that individual Christians may not be sent

thither by the Lord to save individual souls by the foolishness of preaching; but this is a widely different thing from seeking to establish there the power of Gentile nations, or of national churches who give their energies to that monster, "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, whose body is to be destroyed and given to the burning flame." Jerusalem has already been called by the name of Sodom—"Hear ye this, ye rulers of Sodom!" It has been in time past a sink of moral iniquity. But the intellectual greatness and refinements of Egypt have not yet been found united to its moral abominations. Now, however, the unchanged Jewish heart is beginning to be moulded by European wisdom, and what else than Sodom and Egypt can be found in result?

It is a fearful thing to see Christians rejoicing in what has been lately done in Jerusalem. Have they never read or heard of the wickedness, superstition, and idolatry of the so-called Christian Churches of the East? Can it give them any joy to think that a Bishop should be sent to Jerusalem, charged by his ecclesiastical superior in this country not to interfere with those Churches, nor with their prelates, nor with any others bearing rule in them, but on the contrary, to show them all due regard in their office? "We trust your Holinesses will accept this as a testimony of our respect and affection," &c. (*See the Letter of the late Archbishop of Canterbury to the Prelates, etc., of the Ancient Churches in Syria, November*

23*rd*, 1841.) Is this testimony for Christ? Or is it the woman silently leavening the mass, until the whole be leavened?

"*Where also their Lord was crucified.*"] These words should be noted, because they so distinctly mark the scene of this awful chapter as being *Jerusalem*. The next verse shows how much Jerusalem will, at that time, have become one of the world's centres—the gathering place of "peoples and kindreds and tongues and nations." What is *there* done touches the whole earth.

"*The breath of life from God entered into them.*"] This appears to be merely a revival of their natural bodies. It does not say that they were changed and glorified. Elias also, and Moses, on the mount of transfiguration must have been in their natural bodies, for Jesus only is risen the first-fruits in resurrection. Glory attached to the natural face of Moses at Sinai—so also to Stephen at his death.

"*Gave glory to the God of heaven.*"] This does not necessarily imply repentance unto life. It was said to Achan, when about to be stoned, "My son, give glory unto God."

"*There were great voices in heaven saying, The sovereignty of the world hath become the sovereignty of our Lord and of his Christ.*"] The rendering of this passage should be carefully noted. These words may be regarded as spoken immediately after the

Ancient of days has sat and the Son of man has been brought before Him to be invested with the power of earth. The day of Christ will then commence in heaven. The first notification to the earth of its having commenced, will be signs in the heaven, and the descent of the Lord into the air where His saints will meet Him. He comes from heaven into the air with angels only.

"*We give thee thanks . . . because thou hast taken thy great power.*"] This is the time for the resumption of the power which God had delegated to the Gentile monarchs—the time of the destruction of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar.

"*And the time of the dead to be judged.*"] The first resurrection is the first act of manifested discriminative judgment on the world of the dead. The righteous and the wicked alike drop into the grave, and apparently no difference is made between them. But when the righteous are raised in the first resurrection, and the others left in the grave, it will be a distinct and intelligible act of discriminative judgment.

"*And there was seen the ark of his covenant,*" *&c.*] There was seen, not a sprinkled mercy-seat, but the ark surrounded by Sinai terrors; an evidence that Israel and the earth are yet unreconciled at the period of which this chapter treats.

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SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

ADDED IN 1904.

The author is referring, on page 210, to the scheme of the King of Prussia, whereby the Churches of England and Germany were to unite in establishing a Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem. His real aim in that scheme was to have a visible Catholic unity in Christendom, at least amongst Protestants; for "he looked forward to a day when every national church would unite in exhibiting to the East a purified Temple in Jerusalem." In June, 1841, Chevalier Bunsen, a neologian, was sent here as special envoy to explain the King's proposals. The two churches were to work in strict equality: each sovereign in turn was to appoint the successive bishops, and Queen Victoria to begin: the standard of doctrine was to be those of both churches, the Confession of Augsburg equally with the Thirty-nine Articles: an endowment of £30,000 was to be raised equally between the two countries—and the King gave the Prussian half out of his private purse.

The project was warmly received in England. The government approved and helped; the Archbishops and the Bishop of London gave hearty support; and almost the whole body of the Evangelicals were enthusiastic. On 19th July, after seeing Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary, Bunsen wrote to his wife as follows: "This is a great day. The principle is admitted, and the successor of St. James will embark in October. So the beginning is made, please God, for the restoration of Israel." Bunsen's mention of St. James has reference to Acts xii. 17, xv. 13, xxi. 18, &c.

Fierce opposition, however, arose—not from those who held right prophetic truth, but from that Oxford circle who would prefer a union with the idolatrous part of Christendom rather than with Protestant Germany. Newman, for instance, afterwards Cardinal, was so shocked at the Bishops' approval that his faith in the Anglican church (he says) was shattered, and his suspicion was confirmed that she had not been a true church since the Reformation. Pusey wrote to the Bishop of London, "It is now for the first time that the Church of England holds communion with *those that are without the Church*. . . . The Church of England will thus be declared protectress of all Protestant communions!" *The Times* of October 19th, expressed deep disgust that a Protestant should intrude into the diocese of the Eastern prelate who "now occupies, by legitimate succession, the episcopal throne of St. James." Others joined in the fray, though Manning (Cardinal) and S. Wilberforce (Bishop of Oxford), W. E. Gladstone, etc., spoke to Bunsen in terms of great delight. The original design had therefore to be modified. It was made even more latitudinarian, but *Eastwards*, so as to recognise and even to flatter the Greek and the Syrian churches.

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On the other side, the Evangelicals uttered extravagant sentiments. One exclaimed that since the days of David no king had ever spoken such words. Another declared that since Cyrus' proclamation to rebuild the city and temple, no more important royal document was ever issued. The new bishop's old colleagues addressed him, saying, Your appointment is among the signs which God is vouchsafing to our astonished eyes, that He will arise and have mercy upon Zion. And a well-known Christian writer remarked to Lord Ashley on the day of the consecration that *now* the fulness of the Gentiles is surely completed! (Rom. xi. 25).

The Queen's government selected Dr. M. S. Alexander, the Hebrew and Rabbinical Professor at King's College, London. He was a Jew, born in Posen 1799, came to England 1820, was rabbi first at Norwich synagogue, then at Plymouth. Adopting Christianity in 1825 he was baptised in St. Andrew's Church, Plymouth, before more than a thousand spectators. He was consecrated by Archbishop Howley and the bishops of London, Rochester and New Zealand, in Lambeth Palace, November 7th, 1841, Bishop Selwyn preaching—and strangely enough he selected Acts xx. 22 as his text! Peel's government sent the new bishop to his diocese in an Admiralty steamboat, the Devastation, which circumstance some sincere Christians *compared* with Isaiah lx. 9, instead of noticing the striking *contrast*. Dr. Alexander, with his family and his clergy, embarked at Portsmouth in December, and made his official entry into Jerusalem, January, 1842.

In 1845 he died in Egypt, and was succeeded by Dr. Gobat, nominated by the King of Prussia. In 1879 Dr. Barclay, an Englishman, followed. In 1886 the treaty between England and Prussia respecting the Jerusalem bishopric was annulled by mutual agreement, so that the present bishop (Blyth) is connected solely with the Anglican body.

It has been sometimes said that "the appointment of the successor of St. James was celebrated by a dinner at the Star-and-Garter, Richmond." This is clearly incorrect, as may be seen by comparing the diary-extracts of Baron Bunsen and of Lord Shaftesbury, published in their respective biographies. That dinner, October 15th, 1841, was to celebrate the King of Prussia's birthday. Bunsen appears to have presided; and ten others composed the party, including Lord Ashley, his brother William, Dr. Alexander, Dr. McCaul, W. E. Gladstone—Secretary to the Colonies and Board of Trade. Using a metaphor, Lord Ashley wrote: "Gladstone stripped himself of a part of his Puseyite garments, spoke like a pious man, rejoiced in the bishopric of Jerusalem. This is delightful; for he is a good man, a clever man, and industrious."—(Hodder's Life of 7th Earl Shaftesbury.)

*** The above has been compiled from the files of the "Times" of 1841, from Lives of Bunsen, Bickersteth and the Earl of Shaftesbury, and from the official documents concerning the bishopric.

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CHAPTER XV.

On Revelation XII.

THERE have, from time to time, appeared in what is called the civilized world, certain ruling systems of evil whereby Satan and the wicked spirits against whom we wrestle, have commanded the energies of unregenerate men, and fashioned their characters. These systems have in different ages varied. Sometimes they have been secular, at others religious; sometimes fierce and destructive, at others more peaceful and refined. Indeed it is necessary that they should be variously shaped and moulded, in order to meet the varying degrees of light vouchsafed by God, as well as the varying degrees of power allowed at different periods to the prince of this world. But each system in its turn develops a wise and skilful adaptation of moral and intellectual principles to the circumstances of the hour. It adapts itself to the tastes and habits of the day, and thereby secures an influence that effectually subjects society to its directive power.

From the time of Constantine, when the Roman

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Empire first assumed the profession of Christianity, on to the present hour, the system which has most successfully struggled for supremacy has been in form *ecclesiastical.* The fullest development of this system has been seen in Romanism. There, we who live in the West, are wont to turn for the proof of what debased and adulterated Christianity is able to effect, when its principles are systematized and its influence concentrated. The emblem under which professing Christianity is presented to us in the Scripture after it had attained its evil pre-eminence in the earth, is that of a woman, who, having taken meal, leavened it, and so stood prepared to feed those who came to her for food.* It is an emblem not to be confined to Romanism alone: it belongs to every system, which, professing to act in the name of Christ, mingles with Truth, corruption.

But men have widely discovered that corruption has been mingled with that on which they were wont to feed as Truth, and have long begun to make that corruption the excuse for rejecting the Truth itself. Another system is rapidly arising which professes its willingness to recognise and to cherish all forms of religious faith or observance, without definitely accepting any as true. No system, of course, can be more comprehensive, none more conciliatory, than one which is willing to sanction and to shelter all totality of error. This system, it is true, is not

* See "Thoughts on the History of Professing Christianity as given in the Parables of Matt. xiii." advertised at end of this volume.

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yet fully formed. Yet it would not be difficult to enumerate its leading principles, and to point out the sphere in which those principles are at present chiefly found. On this subject, however, we will not now dwell. We must return to it when we come to that chapter which speaks of "Babylon the Great, the Mother of the Harlots and the Abominations of the Earth."

But besides the systems by which Satan sways the nations, there is another system of which the servants of God are cognizant. God also has *His* system—His own divinely ordered system of grace and truth. He has already fully revealed its principles in His holy word: He has promised also finally to give effect to those principles, and to make them paramount in the earth. If the Scripture teaches us respecting the woman who feeds the nations with her leavened meal:—if it warns us also against her, not yet apparent, who bedecked with gold and precious stones and pearls, shall hold a golden cup wherewith she will make the nations drunk with the wine of her fornication:—we read likewise of another woman "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars"—emblems sufficiently indicative of the intrinsic excellency of that system before which at last all other systems shall bow, however little it may be at present manifested in the likeness of such glory.

The children of the Truth will have little difficulty

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in recognising this as the proper glory of the system to which they belong. Truth is their parent; to her they owe the homage of their hearts, however much she may be at present like the widowed Naomi, wandering in the land of the stranger. To the eye of man she has at present no form, no comeliness. She is either unknown, or, if known, hated: but faith knows her, not as seen in the light of the day of man, but as she is recognised above, when viewed in the light of the day of God. This vision of her glory was seen by John in heaven. It is heaven's estimate of that which the kingdoms of the prophetic earth, under Satan, will finally cast out from among them in infamy and scorn. But as soon as the night is spent, and the shadows flee away, and the morning without clouds has come, Truth in all its fulness will stand forth before the nations in the power of the presence of the glory of Christ, and of His risen saints. They whom she has nurtured during the hours of her mourning shall then be her "crown of rejoicing." If we consider what is written in the Scripture respecting that future period "when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount *Zion*, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously"—when *Zion*, the mountain of God's government, shall become the centre of His Truth, we shall not wonder at the symbols here used to describe that Truth's future glory. All its principles will be developed then, and not only developed, but applied according to the power and perfectness of Him from

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whom it emanates. Men will then at last learn what Christianity (for Christianity is but another name for Truth) really is. They will recognise it then as indeed the system of God, embodying every principle of wisdom and knowledge, every rule that is helpful to lead to the attainment of blessing, or to guide in the use of good.

Zion, as I have already said, is the place in which this system of God shall be displayed in its manifested excellency. "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Zion will be the mountain of God's manifested glory; but it will only be this, because it is the mountain of Christ's truth; it is that which will give to Zion its highest dignity; and all the brightness of Zion's outward glory will be but as a halo encompassing that which gives to it its moral excellency. Zion outwardly may be glorious, but it is in Zion *morally* that the true power of blessing will be found. At present, however, we see not these things. Now is the hour of sorrowful separation between her who shall be enshrined in Zion, and Zion. Truth, which will, in that day, give to Zion its highest dignity, has been scorned and rejected there. Therefore "doth Zion sit desolate;" "the Lord hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof." Zion has seen and rejected Him in whose lips Truth dwelt; nevertheless, although rejected, He has introduced into the world the everlasting system of God—that

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system to which every other system shall finally bow, as surely as every knee shall bow to *Him*. We do not, therefore wait for the *introduction* of Truth; though we wait for its *establishment* in its appointed glory. We wait not for the introduction of the system of God, though we wait for the manifestation of its excellency. We are no strangers to Zion morally, though we wait for her association with that place, which, by God's appointment, is indissolubly connected with her rest, her strength and her glory.

In the sixty-sixth of Isaiah (a chapter to which it is necessary to turn, because some of the expressions found in the twelfth of Revelation are thence derived)—in the sixty-sixth of Isaiah we find the description of that future hour when Zion will at last become identified with the Truth—her own proper, though long-rejected system, and when they that are born to the Truth shall be born to Zion. Then fruitfulness will return unto Zion. Then she shall bring forth her children, and that for blessing, without travail, and without sorrow. "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children." A male child (Zachar, a male) is the emblem of strength. It denotes a position of vigour, and energy, and power,

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as pertaining to those to whom this symbol is applied. Accordingly, we read of those thus symbolized being nurtured, cherished, comforted, in Jerusalem—of their heart being caused to rejoice, and their bones made to flourish like an herb—of peace being extended to them as a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Such shall be the condition of those who shall be born to *Zion* in the day when Truth and her interests shall at last prevail, and a standing of strength, and vigour, and power, be granted to her children and maintained.

How contrasted with this picture is the scene described in the twelfth of the Revelation! We see, indeed, her who will by and by be manifested on *Zion*, described, according to heaven's estimate of her intrinsic excellency, by symbols which well beseem her final exaltation; but what are her actual circumstances? Can it be said of her as seen in the vision before us, that as soon as she travaileth she bringeth forth, and that, for peace and joy and present blessing? No! "She being with child crieth out, travailing, and pained to be delivered." And what awaits her child? The strength of *Zion* and the peace of Jerusalem? No! A great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads (that is, Satan wielding the power of all the ten kingdoms of the Roman world, which will then be fully formed), stands ready to devour the child as soon as it is born. And

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the child, instead of being strengthened like the man child in Isaiah, and having the glory of Jerusalem and the nations gathered around it as a flowing stream, is placed beneath the shelter of God's throne in heaven, and Satan is allowed to triumph for a season, and to persecute the woman and the remnant of her seed.

In a wide and general sense, every child of faith in every dispensation, whether Abel, or Abraham, or Stephen, or the millennial saints, are the children of this glorious parent. All such belong to that system which finally shall be manifested in this majesty of glorious power; and, with the exception of the millennial saints, all are partakers of her present sorrows in the earth. But in this chapter, we are constrained to a more definite interpretation; for the time and the circumstances are specific, and fix the chronology of this vision as belonging to a period yet to come. The ten horns of the dragon, which indicate the existence of the ten kingdoms of the Roman world—kingdoms as yet undeveloped: the expulsion of the dragon from heaven, which immediately follows the birth of the man child, and the flight of the woman into the wilderness during the 1260 days of Antichrist's power:—are chronological marks, which give a definite future interpretation to the events predicted in this passage.

In order to understand this chapter, we must go on into the future, and imagine Christianity again found in the midst of unbelieving Israel in Jeru-

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salem, at the time when the ten kingdoms of the Roman world will just be attaining the plenitude of their greatness. That Christianity will, at that period, be found in Jerusalem, is evident from the twenty-fourth of Matthew and various other passages. Many (I doubt not they will be principally, if not exclusively, from Israel) will there be found obedient to the faith of Jesus. They will be born unto God in Jerusalem, just at the very moment when Christianity (especially such Christianity as testifies to the near coming of the kingdom of God), will be the great object of the devil's hatred and dread. He will be holding the full control of the authority of the Roman earth; for he is seen in the vision having ten horns and seven heads, and on his heads seven crowns (seven being the number of completeness), and clothed with this power, he will anxiously watch the travailing of Christianity in Jerusalem, found, as it thus will be, in the midst of the very centre of his dominion. He had seen it there before, when he persecuted Stephen and the Pentecostal saints and scattered them; and when he finds it there again, combining the testimony of *the prophets* with that of *the apostles* of Jesus, and by its mighty voice penetrating his kingdoms to their very centres, and that just at the very moment when he is about to make his last effort to blot out all Truth, he will hate it with aggravated hatred, and will persecute it again. The thought of Christianity attaining anything like a position of strength and

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consolidated influence in Jerusalem would be, almost of all thoughts, the one most hateful to him. He prevented this of old, and he will once more prevent it again. God did not interfere to protect His servant Stephen in the earth, so as to sustain him and those who were with him in their place of testimony here; neither will He so interfere in this future struggle. There is an appointed hour of Satan's rule; and until that hour is passed, that destined place of strength and power, in which they will finally encounter and overcome all opposing influences, shall not be granted to the children of the Truth *here*. God owns them, indeed, as worthy of that place of dignity and strength which shall, by and by, be given to the children of *Z*ion in the day of their glory; for he calls them *Z*achar, a male—a name that marks them out as worthy of a standing of strength triumphant and glorious, and such a standing He will preserve for them in the heavens; but they will not, like the child of *Z*ion in Isaiah, be comforted in Jerusalem, neither will peace be extended to them like a river, nor the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream; on the contrary, they will be like Stephen and the Pentecostal saints, rejected, persecuted, and destroyed. Yet though no standing of strength will be attained by them in the earth, another standing of strength, of greater excellency and of higher glory, shall be preserved for them above. They shall finally share *His* glory, who shall rule all nations with a rod of iron, and

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shall reign from heaven. They will be numbered among the overcomers, to whom it is said, "He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron . . . even as I have received of my Father." Nothing can more distinctly show how all the features which marked the morning of our dispensation in Jerusalem continue unchanged on to its dark closing hour. "This generation shall not pass away until all be fulfilled." We find Christianity still bringing forth with sorrow in Jerusalem, still watched against by the same great enemy, and her children not allowed to grow up and prosper in the earth; yet having their inheritance preserved for them above, even where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.*

* Great care must be taken in interpreting Scripture, to distinguish between expressions or symbols that apply to any person or persons simply as such, or that apply to them in virtue of any office or position that they may be holding. Thus the symbol of a golden candlestick did not apply to the saints in Ephesus simply as such (which is proved by the fact that they continued in Ephesus after the candlestick which represented them was removed); it was a symbol that applied to them solely in virtue of a certain position in the earth which they were holding before God, and which ceased to apply to them as soon as they lost that position.

If therefore we had seen in the vision the golden candlestick which denoted the standing of the saints in Ephesus caught up into heaven, we should not have understood that the saints in Ephesus were personally translated, but simply that that condition or standing which the candlestick denoted was to be preserved for them above. In like manner the symbol of the man child does not apply to the saints in Jerusalem simply as such, but it belongs to them in virtue of a certain standing which, though rightfully theirs, is denied to them on earth, but is preserved for them in heaven.

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And how needful, as we look on through the vista of the future, to mark well the instructions of this Book! To make us *now* partakers of the thoughts of God, is the object of the Revelation. Who would have thought, if judging according to the sight of the eye and the hearing of the ear, that a few poor Christians, by and by to be the object of Satan's rage in Jerusalem and having no strength save the word of their testimony, could be the children of a parent so glorious? Who would see in the movement of the ten governments of the Roman world to persecute these Christians, Satan directing and controlling the power of those haughty kingdoms? Or who would recognise, in the immediately subsequent persecution, not merely of Christians, but of *Christianity*, the result of Satan's exclusion from heaven and the sign of his last hour being come? Yet these things are made known to us, that we

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We have in this chapter to distinguish between the woman which denotes Christianity; the woman travailing, &c., which represents Christianity in certain special circumstances yet to be in Jerusalem; the male child representing those born to Christianity in Jerusalem in respect of that standing of strength of which they are the rightful heirs; and the remnant of the woman's seed who may be Christians anywhere and in any circumstances.

We must remember too, that although symbols denoting *earthly* positions of privilege may be limited, yet it is otherwise with those that refer to heavenly blessings. The Zachar *of Isaiah* is limited to those who shall be comforted in Jerusalem; the Zachar *of the Revelation as soon as seen in its heavenly exaltation*, is a symbol that embraces all who have been, or shall be, born to the Truth during the period of her sorrows. It comprehends Abel, Abraham, David, Paul, ourselves, and all who shall be gathered to Christ before the hour of His glory comes.

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might read the circumstances of earth in the light of heaven. And what comfort for those who shall live and act for Christ in these coming scenes, to see, in this chapter, the record of their condition, and to learn how they are rejoiced over with songs of thanksgiving above!

It is this deed of Satan in bringing the power of the ten kingdoms of the Roman world against the saints in Jerusalem, that causes the first act of divine vengeance grounded on the title of Christ's redemption to be executed on Satan. Human sin has given to Satan a title drawn from the righteousness and holiness of God against man; whereby, standing as it were on the side of Justice and assuming the garb of an angel of light, he enters into the presence of God and there accuses even the brethren. Thus we read in Job, that "there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." He came and accused Job. In this chapter we read, "And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now hath come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brethren hath been cast out, who accused them in the presence of (*ενωπιον*) our God day and night." It is the sufficiency of Christ's redemption alone that enables God, in consistency with His holiness, to screen the guilty, and to assert His title in grace to treat them as "brands plucked from the burn-

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ing." The power thus held in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ He has not yet put forth *in acts of vengeance*, not even against Satan himself. Towards sinners He has acted in long-suffering mercy and in the ministry of reconciliation; and, as to Satan, He has borne his presence and accusations against the brethren of Christ, even in heaven. All this God has done, and kept, as it were, silent. But now the time will have come for Him to put forth His power destructively; and he against whom it will be first directed will be Satan, and the first results of its exercise against Satan will be his everlasting exclusion from heaven, and from all power of accusation there. Angelic power directed against the accuser in virtue of Christ's redemption, will dispossess him of the station which righteousness had, till then, permitted, and will cast him out of heaven with his angels. This will be the first step towards the manifested salvation of Christ's people—the first step in freeing heaven itself from something that has entered there inconsistent with the perfectness of its joy. Heaven will be relieved from his presence; for we can easily conceive how the souls of the righteous (and such are, in chapter vi. as well as here, represented as being cognisant of circumstances in heaven), how they and holy angels must be sensible of the sorrowful fact that the voice of the accuser is not silenced in heaven, but that the tale of sin is ever heard before God, proceeding from the lips of the enemy of His people. Even the know-

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ledge that there is also an Advocate there who ever liveth to make intercession, cannot banish the thought that one of the bitter results of human sin yet remains manifested even in heaven. But though the heavens be relieved, when the accuser is cast out, yet earth has a season of aggravated woe thereby. "Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil hath come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time." He goes down to exalt his servant Antichrist, and to persecute the Woman. Hep ersecutes not merely Christians, but Christianity, and seeks to drive the remembrance of it from the earth. Truth, and not merely the servants of the Truth, will be the first object of his rage. "When the dragon saw that he was cast out unto the earth, he persecuted the woman who brought forth the man child." But Christianity shall never be driven from the earth. It may be driven from what men will look upon as the world's Eden into the distant desert like Elijah when he fled from the fury of Ahab, or Paul when he escaped from Damascus and for three years was sheltered in the Arabian wilderness. The refined and polished regions of the Roman world will allow Christianity no home with *them*: it will have to seek its refuge amongst other nations—it may be in the bosom of uncivilized darkness: but a refuge it will somewhere find, for God will have prepared it. Nations for their own sake, probably, in order that they may preserve their institutions and their laws, will arise

and shield it from destruction; and the ten-horned dragon will in this be baffled. But in his own ten kingdoms he reigns supreme; and therefore, having failed in destroying the outcast Woman, he turns his fury on the remnant of her seed, even all "who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus." His instrument, in this, is a man whose history the thirteenth of Revelation supplies.

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CHAPTER XVI.

Notes on Revelation XII.

"*A woman.*"] The works of men may be viewed either in their outward or physical, or in their *moral* aspect. The outward condition of a city or country, as exhibited in its armaments and wealth and physical greatness, is to be distinguished from the system of laws, government, religion, and the like, which give to such places their *moral* aspect. In the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation, Babylon is spoken of *physically*, and there it is represented by a city: in the seventeenth chapter, it is described *morally*, and there it is represented by a woman.

It is obvious that any given system, whether of evil or good, may not only be contemplated apart from the place of its location, but may become absolutely separated therefrom. Thus the system of Rome was once driven from Rome, and found a refuge in France.* We read in Revelation xvii. that the harlot, that is to say, the system of Babylon—Babylon *morally*, will be at last hated and destroyed by those who, instead of destroying, will cherish the

* At Avignon, where for 70 years the Popes resided, 1305—1376.

city in which that system was collocated. Babylon *physical* will outlive Babylon *moral*. Thus, too, the system of *Zion*—*Zion* morally is at present separated from *Zion*.

One great object of the Revelation, in its visions of glory, is to speak of glories to be manifested in the earth, or to be held in connection therewith. The woman, so gloriously symbolized in this chapter, expresses the glory of that system which is, by and by, to be the earth's system, through and in Jerusalem. It has ever stood thus before the divine mind; and faith can so recognise it now.

It is important to observe that this glorious symbol cannot be referred to the Church, though it belongs to that with which the Church is inseparably connected. The Church had its own proper symbol, viz. "candlesticks of gold"; but, because of its failure, that symbol has been withdrawn; nevertheless, Truth never fails nor alters, however its servants may change. It retains its excellency, whether the candlesticks be, or be not, removed; and thus, at the end of this dispensation of failure, it is represented by a symbol of as bright excellency as originally pertained to it, when its children stood in strength as its pillar and support.

When we shall at last see the doctrines, precepts, government, and order of God—in a word, Truth, in all its applications, brought to bear upon human life—and when the glory of Christ, and of the Church of the firstborn, and of Israel, will be alike

connected with this heavenly system, we shall find little difficulty in appreciating the symbols which are in this chapter used to indicate its glory.

The presence of the personal glory of the Lord will be the *great* characteristic of this system in the coming hour of its exaltation. "The woman was clothed with the sun."

The sun when used to symbolize the millennial glory of Christ, uniformly, I believe, denotes that kind of glory which is prepared for, and adapted to, the circumstances *of the earth*; and therefore stands in contrast with the distant and comparatively unearthly glory of "the star." The glory of the star belongs to distant and unknown worlds; but the sun is a part of our own system, and is specially set to nourish and enlighten *it*. Consequently when Christ first appears in the fulness of divine glory, in "His own glory and in his Father's, and of the holy angels," He is symbolized by the star, "I am the bright and morning star." "To him that overcometh I will give the morning star," *i.e.*, association with Himself in that high character of glory. It is to flesh and blood terrible glory, and in it He will exercise the destructive judgments whereby the day of the Lord will be ushered in. But when He introduces that gracious and benign display of glory whereby Israel and the earth are to be peacefully and abidingly blessed, we find Him symbolized by the sun, "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

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"He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain." On the Mount of Transfiguration also, where we see the special type of that glory in which He will appear amongst men and have intercourse with them, we find that "His face did shine as the sun."

The glory of the Woman, however, is not confined to her being clothed with the sun. "She had on her head a crown of twelve stars." We have seen how frequently stars are used to signify the resurrection glory of the saints. "The wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." The distant and unearthly glory of the heavenly city, and those who are therein, will be one great part of the glory of that system whereof we speak, and will be its "crown of rejoicing." Truth will be able to point to the exaltation of her glorified children reigning in life, and appeal to it in attestation of her excellency. The employment of the inhabitants of the heavenly city, with its twelve gates, will be to give effect to that holy system of Truth and power which will then be paramount in the earth. Hence, perhaps, the crown of *twelve* stars—twelve being the number of instrumental agency.

That authority which hitherto has been so eagerly coveted by men, and made almost the supreme

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object of their ambition—Church authority—falls into the shade in comparison with the greater glories to which we have referred. But it will not be wanting. There is a mild, peaceful character of light connected with the shining of the Church in its moonlike, reflected brightness, that makes it very precious to the need of men who are yet in the flesh, and have, therefore, sin dwelling in them. All, therefore, that men have sought after in Catholicity, Church-unity, and the instruction and guidance thence resulting, will be fully afforded, as soon as Israel in Jerusalem shall take the earthly standing of the Church of God, and become the metropolitan centre of the earth. Israel may well be symbolized by the moon then, for no symbol could more appropriately indicate the character of light in which they will then shine. But Israel will be under the control of Truth, and will be fully subject to the system of God. The moon was under the woman's feet. Hitherto, in her brightest days, she has shone only in the reflected light which the moon symbolizes. That, indeed, will not be wanting; but there will be a greater light, a greater glory—there will be the light of the presence of the glory of Christ, and the glory of the risen saints.

It must be remembered, however, that this glory of the woman and the hideousness of the dragon, her enemy, was a vision seen in heaven. In the judgment of earth the woman will be without form and comeliness; and the ten horns of the great red

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dragon will be delighted in, for they will be concealed under the splendour, refinement, and glory of the sovereigns of the Roman world.

VERSE 3.

"*And there was seen another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems upon its heads.*"]

The ten horns indicate, what they always indicate both in Daniel and the Revelation, the ten sovereigns of the ten final divisions of the Roman world, both in its Eastern or Greek, and in its Western or Latin parts; the Euphrates being the Eastern, and England the Western limit. These ten divisions will be fully developed when the time for the accomplishment of this vision arrives. But when first developed, we do not find the diadems resting on those who severally hold the regal power. The seven heads were crowned, *not* the horns.

It can scarcely have escaped the observation of those who have considered such subjects, that in modern representative systems, the monarch is but the functionary of the will of others. In the days of Nebuchadnezzar or Alexander, it was the individual who ruled. The diadem was upon *his* head. He was not the mere representative of systems, which, though professedly subordinate to, were, in reality, more powerful than himself. But

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as soon as the principle was introduced, not only of the sovereign deriving his authority from the people as its source, but also of his being directed and controlled in the exercise of that authority by a legislative power emanating from the governed, sovereignty ceases, properly speaking, to vest in him, and be becomes, to use the symbol of Scripture, a horn without a crown. Such *will be* the condition of all the sovereigns of the Roman world, when it shall *first* reach its tenfold division.

Yet we must not expect the rise of pure democracy throughout these kingdoms. That will never be. Associations are arising, especially in England, which, though they spring from among the people, are not ruled by the people at large, but by classes, and those classes increasingly composed of men to whom commerce has given wealth. "Capital," or influence derived from services rendered to those who have capital, is fast becoming the centre power of the great "interests" of the day; and into the hands of these "interests," as they are called, governmental power is rapidly passing. Ecclesiastical systems, educational systems, military systems, social systems all bow to wealth; and they will yet bow more. The sovereignty of these "interests" is especially characteristic of the whole Babylonish period, which precedes the Antichristian. All the plenitude of the power of these ruling "interests" will be found in

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the hand of the dragon, for he had *seven* heads, and on *them* the diadems rested. That "heads" represent centres or concentrations of authority, is proved from the seventeenth chapter.

As soon as Antichrist arises into his final greatness, he will sweep away these ruling systems and establish individuality again. Consequently, in the thirteenth chapter, the heads are no longer crowned, but the horns. The ten kings receive *authority as kings* — in other words, they become really sovereign — when Antichrist is elected by them as their head.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the Scriptures teach that despotic power in the hands of man is better than other forms of power. How can they teach this? when they teach that Antichrist, in the fullest form of his evil, is a despot. The Scripture tells us that power, in none of its forms, when left in the hands of man, can end in anything else than misery and ruin; and hence the necessity of One being provided, perfect in love, and perfect in holiness, on whom alone the government shall rest. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this."

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VERSE 4.

"*His tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.*"] I have already remarked on the use of *prospective* names in application to the saints. "Stars" is a symbol, which, in this passage, can only be applied to the saints *prospectively*, inasmuch as Satan will have no power wherewith to reach those who have already entered their heavenly rest and glory. They who may be called to suffer under this fell sweep of the dragon's power, will feel the value of the encouragement thus afforded by the goodness of God, in calling them by these prospective names. It is only for a season, however, and within a limited sphere, that Satan is invested with this destructive power. "Third" gives the same kind of limitation as is given in the eighth and ninth chapters, to the plagues there described. The language in Daniel viii., "And it (the horn) waxed great, even to the host of heaven (the prospective name of the saints), and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them," affords another example of titles prospectively applied. See also Dan. vii. 18, 22, "Saints of the high places."

"*A man child.*"] *Z*achar, literally, "*a male*," as opposed to a female, and therefore indicative of energy and strength. Like "the golden candlesticks," it is a symbol, not of individuals, *per se*, but it symbolizes them in respect of the position they hold. As used in Isaiah this symbol is confined to

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converted Israel in Jerusalem; nor would it, as a symbol of earthly position, be used of Christians out of Jerusalem; nor of Christians in Jerusalem except in peculiar circumstances, both as to unity, power of testimony, and bearing on Israel. It is only in Jerusalem that the child of *Zion* can attain its proper standing of strength.

Although prophecies, from the very circumstance of their being prophecies, cannot be accomplished in events anterior to themselves, yet seeing that most of the occurrences of the latter day have been foreshadowed in events that have already been, it is useful to refer to such past events in the way of illustration. Thus, although the events of the chapter before us are distinctly future, yet they are clearly illustrated by events that have already been. We have already seen Christianity travailing in Jerusalem, and at Pentecost bringing forth. Those whom she brought forth were worthy of being named by this name of strength—*Z*achar; and if the early testimony given to Israel in Jerusalem had been received, and they had *nationally* been converted, the man child born to Christianity in Jerusalem would have grown up and attained the maturity of its strength. But this was not so to be. Satan was permitted to bring the ruling power of Israel and of Rome against it; no standing for the child of Truth was attained in Jerusalem; it was denied to it on earth, but it is reserved for it in heaven.

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Events similar in character I expect again to occur in Jerusalem. I do not indeed look for Pentecostal power, or unity, or miracles—(that we are forbidden by Scripture to anticipate)—but I do expect that a testimony to Christ will again be given to Israel in Jerusalem, which (though unaccompanied by miracle) will, in virtue of the personal grace of those who give it and their knowledge and use of Truth, go forth with a power of moral influence that shall shake Israel, and disturb the slumber of the civilized earth. Against this the dragon will move the ten accordant kingdoms of the Roman world; it will be crushed, dissipated, and will be, as regards the earth, as though it had not been. But its record will be in heaven.

Out of Jerusalem no *Z*achar-place on earth is possible. It is reserved for that city. Yet those who were born to Christianity after the Pentecostal Church was scattered, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, were children of the same glorious parent that gave birth to the *Z*achar. They may be called, what the scattered children of faith prophesied of in this chapter are called, after the testimony in Jerusalem is extinguished—"the remnant of the woman's seed." It is a name that belongs to us now.

I have already observed how much it is the object of the New Testament to connect us with the names and associations of Israel; to show that although the outward Israel is rejected—its temple and

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worship and services gone, yet that an unseen Israel exists who have an unseen temple and altars and sacrifices and services. The very moment when God was about to cast off for ever the *mere* outward Israel, was the time He chose for saying, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my Son out of Egypt;" and again, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Jesus was that Israel. With Him commenced the history of the new but real Israel of God. None but those who either have been or shall be gathered unto Him belong to the true Israel of God; and now, seeing that He hath made propitiation and is gone into the heavenly places not made with hands, we have a priest and a sacrifice, a temple and an altar—we ourselves being priests of the sanctuary who are to be manifested by and by in the *heavenly* courts of Israel's temple as the sons of the true Aaron; and thus whilst outwardly Abraham appears to have no children before God, we are Abraham's children—the true circumcision and part of the Israel of God. It is true, indeed, that the outward Israel will by and by be received back into the favour of God; but not as the *mere* outward Israel. They will not stand under God in blessing, save as identified with those principles which will make them what *we* now are—the spiritual circumcision. Now inasmuch as these principles are, in the estimate of God, of far higher moment, far more *essentially* characteristic of the calling than the mode of their

outward development, He is pleased, as far as may be, to attach to those who now have the principles, the same names of dignity which pertain to those who, in the millennial age, will have the outward circumstances of glory as well as the principles. Thus we are at present called, "A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," forestalling thus the titles of Israel's future glory.

It is therefore, in strict consistency with the universal habit of Scripture, that Christianity (which, not indeed in the forms in which it has practically been exhibited among men but as it is revealed in the Scripture, is God's everlasting system of Truth) should be here presented to us under emblems that will not manifestly attach to it until it becomes identified with *Zion*. Christianity cannot have her rightful pre-eminence, until "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and be exalted above the hills"—(mountains and hills symbolize concentrations of governmental power),—when many people shall go and say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for out of *Zion* shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." That holy and blessed system of truth and power, for which we and all saints have from the beginning suffered, and which now we name Christianity, will then assume

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its destined supremacy in the earth, and become identified with *Zion*, when *Zion* shall arise in the moral grace and in the glory of its high calling in the earth. Even now, therefore, we may be called the children of *Zion*, *i.e.* of *Zion morally*, while *Zion* outwardly is desolate. The woman is *Zion* morally. In this sense we may say—

> "O Zion, afflicted with wave upon wave,
> Whom no man can comfort, whom no man can save."

"*A man-child, who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron.*"] These words are to be read in contrast with the words in Isaiah. The man-child *there* mentioned is not, during the millennium, admitted into association with the heavenly glory of Christ, but is nurtured, "borne on the sides and dandled on the knees" of Jerusalem in the earth. Thus, when the millennial glory commences, there will be two positions of strength and power held by the two divisions of the Israel of God—one in heaven, the other in earth; the first symbolized by the man-child of the Revelation; the second by the man-child of Isaiah. Thus we read of *two* Jerusalems, the heavenly and the earthly. We read also of Mahanaim—*two* hosts, as characterizing the condition of Israel as the Shulamite, *i.e.* the bride of Solomon in that day; Solomon being here the millennial name of Christ, as the Head of Israel. "What will ye see in the Shulamite?"—(*i.e.* as distinguishing her condition.) "Mahanaim, *two*

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hosts." The name was first used by Jacob, when, surrounded by his own earthly band, he was met also by the angels of God—a heavenly host; and he called the place Mahanaim, *i.e. two* hosts. So will it again be with the daughter of Zion, when she is known as the Shulamite. Compare Genesis xxxii. and Canticles vi.

The "ruling all nations with a rod of iron" is a promise made by Christ to those who overcome, in His message to the churches. "And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I have received of my Father."

What servant of God would not rejoice (if it were God's will) to see the nations, as nations—that is, as to all the institutions that give them consolidation as national bodies,—at this moment dashed in pieces, that the new order of God might succeed ?

"*And her child was caught away unto God and to his throne.*"] The scene of this part of the vision was in heaven, not on earth; consequently, *translation* is not indicated in this passage. Preservation is taught by these words, and designation for glory. There is no idea of "*up*" in the word ἡρπάσθη—was caught away.

"*A thousand two hundred and sixty days.*"] This

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period is sometimes expressed in Scripture by "a time, times, and half a time" (see Daniel vii. 25); sometimes by "forty-two months" (see Rev. xi. 2 and xiii. 5); and sometimes by "1260 days," as in this passage. In either case the same period is denoted, viz. *three years and a half.* During this period the Witnesses prophesy in sackcloth in Jerusalem; Christianity is banished from the Roman world; and Antichrist reigns despotically over the ten kingdoms.

The notion that "day" in Scripture means, not a day but a year, is a fabrication of comparatively modern days. The word "day" is never put for "year" in the Scripture. The passages that have been commonly quoted to prove this extraordinary notion, prove very distinctly the contrary; for when God appointed to Israel forty years of wandering in the wilderness, as a punishment for forty days of sin, "years" emphatically mean years and "days," days. So, also, when Ezekiel was commanded to lie on his side forty days, in order typically to bear the sins which Israel had committed for forty years—"days" mean days, and "years" years, in this passage also. Moreover, if the word "time" means not a year but a year of years, then seeing that Nebuchadnezzar was to eat grass as oxen for "seven times," he must still be in that condition—for seven years of years would be 2520 years. I do not enter further on this subject, because it has been sufficiently considered elsewhere. See "Aids

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to Prophetic Enquiry," and Dr. Tregelles on Daniel; also " Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman Empire."

"*And there was war in heaven.*"] This verse commences a fresh paragraph in the chapter; and, as is common in such cases, the narrative recurs to a period prior in time to the event which is last mentioned in the preceding verse, viz. the flight of the woman into the wilderness.

The conflict above, and the final exclusion of Satan and his angels from heaven, is evidently consequent on his interference with the progress of Christianity in Jerusalem. His successful effort to extinguish, by means of the ten kingdoms, that rising light, brings on him the first blow of the divine hand—I mean, the first inflicted on him in the title of Christ's redemption.

In thus casting Satan out of heaven the throne of God is still acting for Christ—Christ not having assumed as yet His millennial power. It is the first exercise of destructive power from God against Satan founded on the title of Christ's redemption. Hence it is regarded in heaven as the assertion of the authority that pertains to Christ in virtue of that redemption—an authority which when enforced is able to deliver his people from the pressure of Satan's accusations (even though those accusations may in themselves be just); and yet more, to eject the accuser from the courts of God, and to take

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from him all power of entering again. Hence the song, "Now hath come the salvation and the power, and the sovereignty of our God, and the authority of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren hath been cast out—he that accuseth in the presence of our God day and night." But this freedom from the presence of Satan was as yet for heaven only. Heaven was delivered from the presence of the accuser, and was commanded to rejoice; but it was otherwise with the earth: "Woe to the earth and to the sea! for the devil hath come down to you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." The accused brethren being still on earth (otherwise Satan's accusations against them could have had no place) had still, as to the earth, sorrow, though in heaven increase of joy.

Angelic power will be used thus to eject Satan. "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon." Michael the archangel is unquestionably an angel and not the Lord. It would not be said of the Lord Christ, as it is of Michael, that he "*durst not*" bring a railing accusation against Satan, but said, "the Lord rebuke thee." Besides which, a comparison of Peter and Jude clearly shows that they are both speaking of the same circumstances; and Peter expressly ascribes to angels what Jude ascribes to Michael. Compare 2 Pet. ii. 10, 11, 12, with Jude 8, 9, 10, observing the identity of the expressions in the Greek.

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The words of our Lord, "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven," must not be supposed to apply to the same event that is spoken of in this passage. Our Lord referred to an event already past, viz. the original casting down of Satan from heaven at the period of his first sin. The occasion on which our Lord used these words was when the disciples returned to him amazed at finding even the devils subject to them through their Master's name. They expressed their surprise in a manner which they would not have done if they had duly considered who their Master was as the eternal God. Accordingly He reminded them of this, saying, "*I* saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven." It was an event that had occurred before the world was; and therefore His words involve a claim to eternal and divine existence, just as when He said, "Before Abraham was I am."

The original casting down of Satan was not merely his exclusion from the courts of God; when cast down, he was deprived and deprived for ever of that glorious condition of heavenly being which, as an unfallen angel, he had possessed above. After man had sinned, and when it pleased God to permit evil in man and evil in Satan to do its worst, Satan was permitted, not indeed to resume his glorious place above, but to enter as the accuser the courts of God's government; professedly upholding the claims of righteousness, and urging the action of justice. But there is an Advocate who is able to

say, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; is not this a brand plucked from the burning?"

It should be carefully remembered that the priesthood of Christ will not cease to be exercised, and that in intercession, when the accuser is cast down. If there were no accuser, our flesh and its sins, whether knowingly or ignorantly committed, would require intercession. Even the millennial saints, seeing that they will be yet in the flesh, will need intercession, although Satan will then be bound: how much more they who will live during the short period that intervenes between his exclusion from heaven and his being cast into the pit! That wrestling against evil spirits of which the Scripture speaks will not cease when Satan is no longer permitted to accuse. Although he and his angels will not have access to the heavenly places, yet this will not lessen the necessity of their being wrestled against by the saints of God who are on earth; for earth is always the sphere of such wrestling—not heaven. The Scripture does not say that we wrestle in heavenly places against evil spirits, but that we wrestle against evil spirits who are (at present) in heavenly places. There will be urgent need to wrestle against them when they are cast down, for they will have great rage and great power for a little season. Satan will still continue then to be the prince of the power of the air, and in the ten kingdoms he will be supreme, with Antichrist as his instrument.

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"*He persecuted the woman.*"] The persecution of the woman is the persecution, not of Christians merely, but of *Christianity*. The history of the Roman world has several times afforded instances of the persecution of Christians; but seldom of the persecution of Christianity as such. During the period, however, when infidelity was established in France at the Revolution of 1792, we see an instance of Christianity's being cast out. It found an asylum in other countries such as this. The institutions of England were averse to the repudiation of Christianity, and it defended it. This is but an imperfect illustration; for the liberality of the day tempered even the attack upon Christianity then; but when this last assault of Satan comes, it will be in all the fury of his power.

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CHAPTER XVII.

On Revelation XIII.

THERE is a wonderful energy in unregenerate man, stimulated, doubtless, and aided, I might perhaps say given, by Satan, which pursues its own plans with a constancy and vigour that nothing but the power of God can effectually hinder. We might have thought that the complicated miseries that had fallen upon Cain—his separation from his parents—his rejection by God—his solitary wandering in the land of his exile, would have quenched the vigour of his and of his children's spirit, and subdued them into inactivity. But instead of this, we find them immediately beginning to open the fair paths of civilization and refinement to the steps of men. They build cities, and handle the harp and the organ, and instruct every artificer in brass and iron (see Gen. iv.) All this was man's desperate effort to make a ruined world happy apart from God. The end was judgment at the Flood.

Again, the waters of the Flood had scarcely 'red from off the earth when we find the energies

of men, and that in direct contravention of the command of God, again developing themselves in the plains of Shinar. God then interfered—confounded their speech, and scattered them; but from that moment forward there has been, in one part of the earth at least, a steady onward progress of human greatness, which God, though he may have sometimes checked it, has never yet interfered effectually to hinder.

I have said, "in one part of the earth." I mean that which is commonly called the prophetic or Roman world. Situate, geographically, around "the Great Sea,"* which washes the fairest coasts of Asia, Africa, and Europe, it seems made to be, what practically it has been, the centre of the world's energies. Connected by the Atlantic with the far distant West—by the Indian Ocean with the East—by the Black Sea and the Danube with the North, it seems naturally suited to be the highway of nations, and the depository of the earth's riches. And this, under Satan, it is, and will yet be more abundantly for a little period; and then, when that season has passed, Emmanuel's land, which is the centre of this centre of the earth, will be, under God, the place where the riches and glory of the whole earth shall be consecrated unto the Lord.

* "The Great Sea" is the name given in the Old Testament to the Mediterranean. If we take a map of the whole world, and mark by a line the boundaries of the Prophetic or Roman earth, in which the ten kingdoms are to be, they will appear little more than the coasts of the Mediterranean.

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"The multitude of camels shall cover it, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah: all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord." (Isa. lx. 6.)

But it is not in geographical position that the kingdoms of the Roman world have their *chief* distinction. The providence of God has caused that everything that has abidingly acted upon man so as to give a character to human life and a direction to its energies, should arise and be matured in these regions. The native energy of Nimrod, the beginning of whose kingdom was Babel; the early greatness of Egypt, Jerusalem, Tyre, Nineveh, and Babylon; the more systematic greatness of the empires successively constituted in Chaldea, Persia, Greece, and Rome; the instructions of Moses and the Prophets; and, afterward, of the Lord Jesus and His Apostles,—all these influences, all tending in the use that man has made of them, to consolidate the fabric of human greatness, have been found within the limits of the Roman world. It has been their birthplace and their centre.

From the days of Nimrod to the present hour, God (as I have already said) has never interfered to hinder the onward progress of human counsels. One generation has added to the wisdom of another. The fresh skill which has devised for itself new inventions has not scorned to profit by the ex-

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perience of former ages. Pride even has been subjected in the eagerness of pursuit; and thus the swollen tide of human greatness is flowing onward with a rapidity and strength that baffles all human calculation as to the result. But the word of God has marked its history, and faith is able to read it and understand. It is no marvel, then, if the ten kingdoms of the Roman earth, which form the gathering-place of this tide of greatness, should become, as it were, the Eden of the world: it is no marvel if *he* should be esteemed great, to whom individually and exclusively the glory of these evil kingdoms shall finally be given.

Four mighty empires have, as I have said, successively borne sway in the prophetic earth. But although these empires have been each in their turn glorious, yet there has been no completeness, no perfect concentration of glory in any. That which had been present to one has been found lacking to another; and the diversity thus created has afforded perpetual occasion for depreciatory contrast. The second had not the majesty of the first, nor the first the fierce and warlike prowess of the second. The Roman had not the elegance of the Grecian, nor the Grecian the stern consolidated strength of the Roman. The lion was different from the bear; each different from the leopard; and all different from the iron leviathan that succeeded. Yet there were qualities in all

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these which men have wondered at and loved. The majesty and splendour of sovereign rule was found chiefly in the empire of Babylon; and this men have always honoured. The fierce prowess of the Medo-Persian empire, the elegance of the refined yet warlike Greece, and the stern strength of the Roman monster, have all exercised a fascinating power over the human heart. We may well conceive, therefore, the resistlessness of their influence when seen in combination together; especially when attended by the results which the exercise of such powers must necessarily produce. They will be idolized in themselves; idolized also because of the effects which flow from their development.

But marvellous as such concentration of greatness must ever be, yet the power of its attractiveness will be tenfold increased by its being found, not in an empire, not in a system, but in an individual man. It is the intention of God soon to manifest a man, even THE man who is His fellow, as the centre and channel of all majesty, knowledge, might, glory, and power. Satan also will glorify with his glory an individual man, and men will rejoice in it; not only because it is the will of that mighty spirit that worketh in them, but because they delight in seeing one of themselves exalted. If then we can conceive, not merely the majesty and outward glory of ancient empires, but also all that has characterized those empires in

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intellect, knowledge, arts and arms—if we can imagine the splendour of Oriental monarchs, such as those of Nineveh and Babylon; the valour of conquerors such as Cyrus, Alexander, and Cæsar; the intellect of statesmen, poets, and orators,—such poets, for example, as have, in this our own age, spread (inspired doubtless by Satan) the power of their fascinating but pestilential influence over unnumbered souls—if we can thus conceive all varieties of intellectual power, and all diversities of outward greatness, combined in a man, we may form some conception of the glory of this great one of the earth. The combination of the symbols of empires can alone symbolize him. The lion of Babylon, the bear of Persia, the leopard of Greece, and the fourth or Roman beast are united to represent him. The hitherto divided power and scattered intellect of all former ages will be in him so centred, that he may be almost said to personify the past, and that in him the mighty dead will live again.

His character, therefore, will present no new or strange features of terror to the eyes of men. It will only be the fuller and more matured development of what they have long learned to honour and admire. If the genius of such men as Voltaire, and Byron, and Buonaparte, have hitherto been their delight; if these, and other such men less openly godless, have been able (guided, doubtless, and sustained by unclean spirits dwelling in them,

for fallen man is but a poor weak thing apart from Satan)—if, I say, such men have long been accustomed to soothe the hearts and fascinate the minds of the children of disobedience, how should it be otherwise, when the glories of intellect and taste, of war and conquest, of the genius as well as the majesty of sovereign rule, are found for the first time in perfect and harmonious combination? The very cities and regions over which he rules will add to the delusion of that fearful hour; for where have the thoughts of men so fondly lingered, as in Rome, in Greece, in Egypt, in Babylon, and in Jerusalem? The associations of enterprise, taste, learning, and religion, are all bound up with these places; and these are the very places that are to rise, as it were, from the tombs, in the semblance of the glories of the true hour of restitution from the hand of God.

But in addition to all this natural attractiveness, it will be the hour of Satan's peculiar power. He has the command of all the glory of the earth, wherever he is allowed to work unhindered; and he will be allowed to act without restraint in the ten kingdoms then. His object will be to exalt this mighty monarch. "The dragon gives him his power, and his throne, and great authority." The hearts, the tongues, and all the energies of men (and on this, human glory hangs), will soon be directed by Satan, around this object of his choice. God also will "send strong delusion, that they

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should believe a lie." (2 Thess. ii.) Deceiving miracles likewise will be given: so that all the tendencies of nature, all the energies of Satan, in addition to the direct mission of the spirit of delusion from God, will concur in riveting the hearts of men upon him who will thus mock the glory of the Christ of God. Such is the ruler of the Roman earth, during the time that the two witnesses of God are prophesying in sackcloth, and whilst the Woman is seeking an asylum in distant lands. This is he, through whom the dragon makes "war with the remnant of her seed, even those who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

I have already observed that it is in the *seventeenth*, not in the *thirteenth* chapter of the Revelation that we find the most early history of Antichrist. He is there seen as a beast, "with seven heads and ten horns;" *i.e.* he is the virtual possessor of all the power of the Roman earth; but neither his heads nor his horns are crowned—for the crowns are on the dragon then (chap. xii.), and Antichrist is seen in the somewhat humble place of the sustainer of the harlot; in other words, when he first appears he is virtually her servant, and, subordinately to her, holds the authority of those *systems* by which the kingdoms are regulated during the time that the political and moral *system* of Babylon prevails. He sustains this system for a season, and therefore the woman is seen riding upon his

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strength. How long he remains as the pillar of this system which he afterwards destroys, I do not know to be anywhere revealed. But it is doubtless during this period that he first becomes known among men. The ten kings would not concur to give their glory to a stranger. His intellect, his taste, his leopard grace, and his fitness for the majesty of power, will have been sufficiently proved before they give him their crowns, and before the dragon resigns to him his throne and great authority. Satan does not act carelessly. He exercises due caution in meeting the wants and tastes of men, and therefore when we read that the dragon went and stood upon the sand of the sea, it was not to call up thence an unknown stranger, but one already fitted for the place in which he and Satan were together to act, in parity of glory, for a little season.

When it is said that "he (*i.e.* the dragon) stood* upon the sand of the sea," I see no reason to doubt that it is that same sea from which Daniel before beheld the Gentile empires arise, and which is there expressly said to be "the great," or Mediterranean sea. The dragon had just been acting in Jerusalem and the land of Israel: it was there that he had persecuted, and thence that he had driven, the Woman. He now goes down to the Great Sea,—the sphere and the representative of Gentile power, and, standing on the shore with the

* Ἐστάθη is the right reading.

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countries of the East behind him, he calls up from the Western sea into the great countries of the East, one whom he is about to make lord of the East and of the West together. "I saw a beast arising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as those of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power and his throne, and great authority." Such is his description in the word of God. The ten horns show him to be the possessor of the same strength and extent of dominion that pertained to Rome. But it is not the number of his kingdoms, nor the firmness of his power, that will give to this great monarch his prominent or most attractive feature. "The beast that I saw was like unto a leopard." The leopard was the Grecian beast, and it was in Greece, and in Greece alone, that the refinements and elegancies of civilization have found their birthplace and their home. Grandeur of power, greatness of resources, and costly luxuriousness, have been found chiefly in the East. In the feast of Ahasuerus we read of "white, green, and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble; the couches were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble. And they gave them drink in

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vessels of gold (the vessels being diverse one from another), and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king." Such is Oriental splendour; but intellectual greatness and triumphs of mind have been principally found in the Western nations. Intellectual greatness, and not only that—but intellect associated with the beauties and refinements of cultivated taste, is necessary in order to secure the full homage of the human heart. Let us imagine any one surrounded by all the magnificence of Oriental greatness, and all the reality of power; he would fail to secure the worship of the hearts of men, unless he connected therewith the graces and fascinations which intellect and taste alone can give.* Hence the predominant form in this

* This association of intellect and taste has been found almost exclusively in Greece. In modern Europe it is increasingly otherwise. It has been frequently remarked (and it is the subject of lamentation to many) that utility is the alone idol of the present day. Taste is obliged to succumb to usefulness, and even intellect is chiefly valued so far as it subserves "useful purposes." Mechanical science supersedes literature, and the creations of fancy give place to the realities of practical invention. Such, probably, will continue to be the case during the whole Babylonish period.

We see Western Europe at this moment acting most influentially on the East: but it is not with the view of restoring the beauty and refinement of those cities, wherewith Greece once covered the shores of the Archipelago; but they are seeking for ports and havens—quays and storehouses—rivers, canals, and roads, for their traffic. These are the objects of modern pursuit. But when Babylon's system ceases, and Antichrist rises as the leopard, he at once gilds the scene, and without destroying the utilities, restores the fascinations of human life. He is not seen as the leopard in the seventeenth chapter.

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complex beast is, not the lion or the bear, or the Roman monster, but the leopard of Greece. As such he arises into the regions of the East. But the spirit of all former empires is in him. As the lion of Babylon (for "his mouth was as the mouth of a lion"), he has the majesty and dignity of Oriental power: like the bear of Persia (for "his feet were as the feet of a bear"), he will be marked by the fierce savageness of conquest;—taste, intellect, refinement have no power to hide footsteps tracked in blood: his sway, as regards both its iron strength and its geographical extent will resemble Rome, for the *ten* horns of the fourth monster were seen upon his head.

We may conceive of his adaptation to his appointed work by the readiness with which the devil assigns to him his throne. "The dragon gave him his power, and his throne and great authority." Other monarchs have been the devil's servants, but Antichrist will be, in an especial sense, his delegate. He will occupy the devil's throne; the diadems before seen on the dragon's heads are now seen on the beast's horns; and men, it is said, will worship him and will worship the devil too. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet seem to mock the Trinity of heaven. The two first, at any rate, appear to be presented as claiming co-equal honour; the third is the power through whom that honour is given. And when we consider how long men have been accustomed to ascribe

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to God what the spiritual eye sees clearly to be the work of Satan; when we see wicked and worldly ecclesiastical systems, and wicked conquests, and wicked writings assigned to the Spirit of God or to God's providence, and thanksgiving professedly returned to His name for them; when we see a Christian, and, as we trust, a real Christian, consenting to become the high priest of heathen ceremonies in the name of Christ and of God;* when we see Christian ministers "consecrating" (as men say) in the name of Jesus, the bloody standards of destroying armies, and speaking of the progress of mere human civilization, as if it were the progress of Christ's Truth, do we not see Satan mistaken for God? I will not say that he is worshipped—but can we wonder if conscience should become so hardened by deeds like these, as gradually to reach such a distance from God, as that God should at last give men up to believe a lie, and send delusion upon them, and allow them to substitute Satan for Himself? † Miracles also

* I allude to the present [A.D. 1844] prelate of the Order of the Garter, who officiates at the installation of the knights of that Order. The ceremonies fully merit the name I have given them. They seek to sanctify in the name of Jesus, not only the sceptre and crown of the monarch, but the spur and sword of the knight. We all know what chivalry has been; and it is this that men thus dare to consecrate. The guilt of such iniquity rests not merely on the individuals who are more immediately engaged in it, but on the system that thus consents to serve the world in its vices.

† I do not mean to include real children of God in this. I speak

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will be wrought,—"his coming shall be after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and prodigies of falsehood" (*τέρασι ψεύδους*).

One marvellous feature in the vision of the beast as seen arising from the sea, is that he arises with one of his heads wounded,* apparently unto death. But the wound was suddenly healed, and men marvelled the more. The Scripture, it is true, does not in express words reveal what the wound is, or what its healing; yet it may, I think, with much certainty be inferred: for when we remember that Antichrist had previously to this, during all the period of which the seventeenth chapter treats, been possessed of all the influence of *the systems* by which the ten kingdoms had been ruled—his heads representing those systems as centres of concentrated power; and when we consider further, how decidedly the element of ecclesiastical influence is blended into the arrangements of all the kingdoms of the prophetic earth, forming one of their chief instruments of rule; and consequently how great

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generally. When speaking of Satan as being thus worshipped, we must not think of him in the hideousness of his character as known to faith. He is able to transform himself into an angel of light, and will probably be spoken of by Antichrist, not under the name of Satan, but as the being from whom, conjointly with himself, all the power and glory and prosperity in which men will be rejoicing, emanate; even as the Lord Jesus, when seated on the throne of His father David, will acknowledge the Father, and direct the hearts of men to Him.

* *Εσφαγμένην*, in the past tense, implying that he first met the eye of John in this wounded condition. This symbol does not

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the shock will be to the whole social and political fabric when all religious influences are suddenly swept away, we can easily understand how Antichrist, when he destroys the harlot, purchases his place of solitary greatness by forfeiting one of the chief centres of his former influence; and therefore he may well be described as rising into his power with one of his governmental heads wounded as unto death. When, at the close of the last century, ecclesiastical influence fell in Paris, government fell with it; the bonds of society were dissolved, and men were nigh becoming "as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things that have no ruler over them." So would it be again if man had nothing to worship; and therefore Satan will have in readiness another system, to be substituted for that which perishes, when the former falls. It will indeed be a system of blasphemy against God, and against all heavenly beings. It is the entire rejection of *them*, for "he opens his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and tabernacle, even those who dwell in heaven," but it is not the rejection of all worship and of all religion; Antichrist and his image are to be the new visible centre of religion, and a high priest suited to the system is prepared by the same energy of evil that produced its head. Its head is secular; he is the great mon-

imply that Antichrist *personally* will be wounded. It is a symbol that applies to him only governmentally. It indicates that he is smitten *as to a certain branch of his power.*

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arch of the Roman world. Its priest is described in the verses that immediately succeed.

"*I beheld another beast arising from the earth.*" *] The former beast had arisen from the sea. He through whose energy the Monarch of monarchs had been called up from the Great Sea of the Gentiles, now raises another instrument of his power who arises from the earth. And if the sea be the Great Sea, *i.e.* the Mediterranean, and the scene in all these three chapters (xi., xii., xiii.), the land of Israel, there can be little reason to doubt that the part of the earth here spoken of and contrasted with the Great Sea of the Gentiles, is the land of Israel. At any rate, it is in Jerusalem and the East that the last idolatrous system of this evil age will find its home, and there are many reasons that would lead us to say that the land of Israel will be its birthplace too.

The Greek or Eastern part of the Roman empire, where Israel has been and will be, is a sphere in which those modern principles of progress which have long been nurtured in our island are finding one of the chief spheres of their development. Multifarious systems are found in operation there—all

* Or land, as opposed to sea. "God called the dry land, Earth; and the gathering together of the waters, called he, Seas." Here, it appears to be a particular part of the dry land; as connected with a particular sea. If in the vision, the dragon takes his stand on the sea-coast of the land of Israel, and one beast is seen arising from the sea, and another from the land, we cannot be in much doubt as to the interpretation.

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antagonistic to each other, but none sufficiently strong to have exclusive potency. The ecclesiastical system of the Greeks has waned and is divided; Mahomedanism has become enfeebled; Romanism has only a measure of influence; Protestantism, at present, has even less. Israel will soon appear on the scene, and then another neutralizing element will be added. But all this facilitates the progress of a system that is willing to ignore Truth, and seeks to conciliate and patronize anything and every thing, for the sake of influence and gain. England —favoured Protestant England, at present, best understands and most efficiently uses this system. England probably will have the privilege of teaching it to Israel, who will be acute to see, and wise to avail themselves of its advantages. In their hands and in the hands of the subtle Greeks it will prosper still more, and develop itself in those long-desolated regions of the East which are waiting for the impress of some new vivifying power. We may well expect, therefore, that the last and crowning system of apostasy should appear in the regions where these wickednesses will have been chiefly perpetrated.

The energy of this last religious system will, as I have said, be centred in an individual, who will instantly supply to the king his master, all, and more than all, that had been lost through the head wounded seemingly unto death. "He exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his presence (*ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ*), and he causeth the earth

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and those who dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." It will be the first time in the world's history, when the ecclesiastical head of the religion of the earth will act in strict concurrence with, and in subordination to, the secular throne. We have hitherto seen emperors and kings contending with patriarchs and popes. We have seen each in their turn aiming to possess themselves of the other's seat: but we have never yet seen throughout the Roman earth, the thoroughly harmonized combination of civil and religious power. It will be seen, however, then; and thus the headstone is placed upon the mighty fabric of antichristian strength. Man is not happy without a religion; and he will have a religion then, adapted, doubtless, to his taste and suited to his propensities. It will be idolatrous, sustained by miracles, and dignified by power. Its minister, though he will speak as a dragon, yet in appearance will be as a lamb—"he had two horns as a lamb"—and will "say to those that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, who hath the wound by a sword, and did live." Miracles also will wait upon his word. He will have power to "make fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men." *

* The efficacy of such a miracle in deceiving the Jews is very obvious. There is at this moment a controversy being carried on among them, whether, in case they should return to Jerusalem it would be possible for them to offer sacrifice without fire sent down from heaven—some holding the necessity of this, others

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This is not the first time in which the image of Antichrist is spoken of in the Scripture. Both Daniel and our Lord speak of the abomination (*i.e.* idol, for in Hebrew the word is the same) of desolation, and say that its place will be the temple of Jerusalem. It is to stand in the holy place. The prophet of Antichrist will have power to give life, or breath (πνεῦμα) to this, his image, "that the image should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." The self-will of man will be effectually, though, I suppose, willingly, controlled then.

It is surely an awful scene; but it will be limited both as to time, and as to place. The time is 1260 days; its place the Roman world, and more especially the land of Israel. God might have allowed, if it had so pleased Him, the whole earth to be full of this maturity of evil. The seeds of it, doubtless, are sown everywhere,—wheresoever the mind of man under Satan has put forth its powers; but the merciful providence of God has checked, and will check,

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pleading that God would permit the use of ordinary fire. On the day when the priests of Israel were first consecrated, fire came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice; and so when Elijah pleaded the cause of Jehovah against the priests of Baal.

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their growth in other regions; so that it is in the ten kingdoms only that the full harvest will be found. There the vine of the earth will bring forth its ripened clusters; there Satan's deceiving fires of heaven-like brightness will be kindled. Yet others who dwell without the enchanted circle may be dazzled by the blaze of glory, and rush into the toils of the great fowler; others will be providentially restrained; others will be wise and understand the signs of the times. "The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the understanding-ones shall understand."

We who are dwelling in these western limits of the Roman world should of all men most peculiarly beware; for we live in the very countries from which the principles which are especially forwarding this mystery of iniquity are deriving their impulse and their power. Many of these principles are fascinating in their aspect, and fruitful of prosperity in result; they breathe of amity, and good-will, and brotherhood; their fruits are seen in the taste, the literature, the commerce, and the decorated religion of the day. Education too, for the most part, is made to foster the tendencies of the hour, (for what is there that we are ordinarily taught to admire and to cultivate that does not fall under the symbol of the lion, the leopard, or the bear?) so that, thus far, there will be no strange features of hideousness in Antichrist to terrify into separation from evil, those who refuse to be separated from it by the Truth now.

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Blessed are they who learn by the Spirit of Christ to walk *with* Him, among the proud and stately scenes of Gentile power. "Come *with me* from Lebanon, my spouse, *with me* from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards." Such is the place of the Church's present sojourn. The land of Immanuel, which shall by and by be the joy of all lands, is deserted—the proud mountains of Gentile glory are around us—we are in the midst of lions' and leopards' dens;—we may see their form and hear their roar, but we shall not fear them if in companionship with Him. They will not remain for ever; other scenes will quickly open, when the mountains of the Gentiles shall be brought low, and "Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one;" and instead thereof the Lamb shall stand upon Zion, the mountain of God, and the new centre of the earth's government arise—that mountain of which it shall be said, "the Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice and mountain of holiness!" This is referred to in the succeeding chapter; but the thirteenth chapter speaks not of these things; its subject is the day of the glory of man under him who hears and welcomes that word (spoken though it be by the devil) "ALL THIS will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship ME."

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Notes on Revelation XIII.

ATTENTION to the detail of prophetic description is needful, not only for enabling us to form a correct estimate of the future, but also for guarding against that error which has for ages been the bane of truth, viz., the application of prophecy to wrong objects, and thereby the assertion of its accomplishment long before the real subjects of description have arisen. This error will always be fallen into when the specific facts of Scripture are neglected, and we satisfy ourselves with general resemblances merely, and remote analogies.

The modern habit of referring this chapter to the head of the Papal system is a memorable example of this culpable carelessness of interpretation. I say, *modern* habit, because during all the darkness of the first thirteen centuries, and even later, we find a series of writers concurrently asserting that this dispensation at its close is to be marked by the development of a *secular*, despotic, and (as regards the Roman world) universal system

of blasphemous infidelity, and that its head is described in the chapter before us.* But in the Protestant conflicts with Popery all this has been forgotten, and prophetic Scripture has been throughout interpreted as if Popery were the one sole subject of its denunciations. That an influential worldly system, like Popery, will have many principles of evil in common with another influential system like Antichristianism, is certain; especially when the first has been for ages acting on, and morally forming, some of the leading countries out of which Antichristianism is to arise. Popery is no doubt a chief channel towards Antichrist. But this is no more than can be said of many other worldly systems that are cast in a different mould from Popery, and are in many things antagonistic to it, such as Mahomedanism; the Greek Churches of the East; Socinian, Neologian, and other forms of nominal Protestantism; and Judaism.

Attention to one simple fact is sufficient to prove the futurity of this chapter. It describes the whole Roman world, throughout *all* its extent, as brought completely under one resistless despotism. Now inasmuch as neither the whole, nor a half, nor a third, nor a tenth of the Roman world is at present under the *sole* control of any one individual, or any one system, (for it is emphatically an hour of the division of power,) it follows that this tyrannic sys-

* For quotations from writers of the first thirteen centuries, see "Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman Empire."

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tem of successful despotism must yet be future. That it cannot *have* appeared and waned, or passed away, is manifest from this—that the power of the beast and of the ten kingdoms who are to be with him, never wane; but, when once they have appeared, will continue in the full vigour and plenitude of power, until they shall suddenly be swept into destruction by the glory of the coming of the King of kings, and Lord of lords. See Rev. xvii. 12, &c.

Again, one of the most remarkable and characteristic features of this chapter is, that it marks the SECULAR as *taking precedence of* the ECCLESIASTICAL power. The second beast, who is to direct the worship of all over whom Antichrist will rule, takes the *secondary* place in the presence of (*ἐνώπιον*) the mighty secular monarch on whom the ten diadems rest. Subordination to the crown, which Popery hates, will be the very principle in which the false prophet who ministers in the presence of Antichrist will glory.

Indeed if we examine the specific descriptions of this chapter we shall find that Popery answers to none.

I. The beast with ten horns is distinctively a *secular* power: Popery is distinctively *ecclesiastical.*

II. The beast from the moment of his appearance in this chapter on to the end of his course has his ten horns crowned with diadems: but Popery has never worn the *diadems* of the Roman world. Even ecclesiastically it has never reigned continu-

ously over the *Western* division of the Roman empire, much less over the East and West together.

III. The beast had seven heads. When did all the ruling systems, commercial, educational, religious, military, political, &c., throughout the whole prophetic earth, fall under the exclusive control of Popery, or of any other system or individual, that yet has been?

IV. The beast when it *first* is seen in this chapter, has all its horns crowned. How could this be said of Popery?

V. The beast when it first appeared had one of its heads *already* wounded. How could this be interpreted of Popery?

VI. The beast was like a leopard. The leopard was the Grecian beast. Has not Popery been distinctively *Latin*, and not *Greek*, both in origin, territory, character, and everything else that can, under this head, be mentioned as a point of contrast? The influence of Popery has been remarkably *obstructed* in the Eastern part of the Roman empire, where Antichrist will be chiefly dominant.

VII. The *whole* prophetic earth is not only subject to, but wonders after and worships the beast. When has the Pope been thus worshipped?

VIII. The beast continues forty and two months. Is this the limit of the duration of Popery?

IX. Another, and he distinctly a minister of *religious* power, exercises the power of the ten

horned beast in his presence. When has the Pope ever had such a minister?

X. All, except those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, consent to worship the beast. In other words, *every* servant of Satan throughout the whole Roman world will unite himself to Antichrist. Have there never been any wicked men who have stood aloof from Popery?

XI. An image of the beast is made, endued with life, caused to speak, and to command that whosoever would not worship it, should neither buy, nor sell, but be put to death, and this throughout the whole extent of the Roman world. Where do we find anything in the history of Popery answering even remotely to this?

It would have been well if Protestants, instead of branding the Pope *only* with the name of Antichrist, had sought out the tokens of Antichristianism that are to be found among themselves. Infidelity, (such, for example, as that which now abounds in Germany and Switzerland,) the willing enslavement of Protestantism in many places to the secular power, and the necessary consequences thence resulting, will be found to stamp on Protestantism, in many of its forms, marks as characteristically antichristian as any that can be found in Popery. Besides which, Protestantism has done what Popery has not done, denied the rise of a future Antichrist and the consequent apostasy of the secular power from God. Yet I doubt not this has been done by many a Pro-

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testant in ignorance, not in wilfulness, and that it is among the Protestants and those converted to Protestantism that God is granting repentance and the acknowledgment of the truth. His blessing will never be entirely withdrawn, wherever the authority of His written word is honestly maintained.

"*And he stood on the sand of the sea.*"] "He stood," not "I stood," is the right reading—"he" referring to the Dragon. These words should properly commence the thirteenth chapter, which is in fact the sequel of the twelfth, and should be read with it.

All the four universal empires—the Chaldæan, Persian, Grecian, and Roman are said in Daniel to arise from "the Great Sea," which is the name of the Mediterranean in the Old Testament. Neither of these empires are recognised in Scripture as established in their proper supremacy until they had reached the Mediterranean and incorporated that sea within their rule. Antichrist also will have that sea as the basis of his dominion. The scene of the preceding chapter is clearly the land of Israel; and this would of itself lead us to say that the sea spoken of is the Mediterranean. The countries of the Roman empire over which Antichrist will reign, if marked by any distinctive colour in a map of the world, appear to be nothing more than the coasts of the Mediterranean.

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"*A beast.*"] This name in its *imperial* meaning is derived from Daniel vii., where the four successive universal empires are denominated "*beasts.*"* Such is heaven's estimate of kingdoms that have been by men wondered after and adored. Hitherto (except indeed when some great type or forerunner of Antichrist has for a moment crossed the scene) men have been accustomed to associate thoughts of imperial greatness with *empires* rather than with *individuals.* We hear of the Chaldæan *empire,* the Roman *empire,* and the like. But when Antichrist arises, all thoughts connected with imperial power and glory will be concentrated on *him.* Accordingly the symbol which Scripture had before employed to denote "empires," is now appropriated to him. He is emphatically THE beast. Thus Napoleon, when some one spoke to him of the power of France, said, "France? what is France? *I* am France."

"*Having ten horns.*"] This is the *Roman* characteristic, and is the more important, because it marks the *territorial* extent of the rule of Antichrist. We have only to mark out the territorial extent of the dominions of Rome, and we have then before us that part of the earth out of which the ten prophetic

* I have already remarked on the error which, in our version of the Revelation, has confused between ζῶα and θηρία, and instead of giving to the heavenly cherubim their proper name of "living creatures," has ascribed to them the name of those evil empires whose characters are at last concentrated in Antichrist.

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kingdoms are to arise, and over which Antichrist is to rule.

The Roman empire in its *widest* extent, during the reign of Trajan, included the following countries:—

In Western and North-western Europe.

England and Scotland.
Spain and Portugal.
France and Savoy.
Belgium and parts of Holland west of the Rhine.
Luxembourg.
Rhenish Prussia, west of the Rhine.
Baden, Wirtemburgh, and most of Bavaria.
Switzerland.

In Southern and South-eastern Europe.

Italy.
Greece.
All the islands of the Mediterranean.
Turkey in Europe south of the Danube.
Austrian Provinces north of the Alps and south of the Danube.

North of the Danube and answering to the ancient Dacia.
- That part of Hungary which lies east of the Roman Vallum.*
- Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia, Bessarabia.

* The remains of the Roman Vallum are still visible. It left the Danube a few miles east of Belgrade, and running by Temesvar,

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In Asia.

The Turkish dominions, taking the Euphrates as the south-eastern limit and the north of Arabia as the southern; this division including Palestine and Asia Minor.

In Africa.

Egypt and the whole northern coast, viz. Libya, Tripolis, Tunis, Algeria, and Fez. Sallè a little outside the Straits of Gibraltar, was their most westerly city.

Such are the countries indicated, when we speak of the Roman world, or prophetic earth—the "Orbis Terrarum," or Πᾶσα ἡ οἰκουμενη, of the Romans. We shall gradually see these countries brought into closer and closer union. Similar governmental principles (viz. those of limited monarchy indicated by the clay-iron of the image seen by Daniel) will finally prevail throughout them all, and the rising latitudinarian system represented in the Revelation by the harlot of the seventeenth chapter, will form the centre of their union. At the time when this system shall have become fully developed, the territories above enumerated will have been divided into ten kingdoms, answering to the ten toes of the image of Daniel and to the ten horns of the fourth beast.

continued its northern course until it met the Upper Theiss, which there runs from east to west. Dacia was retained as a Roman province for upwards of 160 years. For further remarks on the subject, see "Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman Empire," ch. ii.

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These after being first reigned over by the harlot, will, after her destruction, concur to give their glory and power unto Antichrist, "until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

Half of the territory above described was conquered by the Romans from the Greeks, and from the earliest period was strongly contrasted in manners, language, and civilization with that which they conquered in the West, where, for the most part, barbarism reigned. The distinction, therefore, between the Greek and Latin divisions of the Roman empire is not to be founded on the mere arbitrary arrangements of the later emperors; it was a distinction that subsisted from the beginning. The distinction is still visible; and will become more so, as the influence of the Greek name is revived in the East. The Greek or Eastern division of the Roman empire answers, very nearly, to the countries that are, or have been, under the rule of the Turks.

"*Seven heads.*"] This is a characteristic that attaches to no imperial power except Antichrist. He is the first person who will have complete control of *all* the influential systems that sway society.

"*On his horns ten diadems.*"] I have already remarked on the difference between the monarch who holds the executive power being subject to the legislative direction of his subjects, and his being independent of such control. In the latter case, the

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horn (for that symbolizes the holder of the *executive* power) is crowned: in the former case the horn is *not* crowned. We are now entering on a period in which "the great interests," as they are called, will virtually rule the monarch. Hence, in the twelfth chapter, the diadems are on the heads, not on the horns. In the thirteenth chapter, on the contrary, "the interests" being then thoroughly subjected to the monarchs, the diadems are transferred to the horns.

"*And on his heads names of blasphemy.*"] This is important, because it shows how thoroughly society will have become leavened by the principles of Antichrist. There have been periods when society has resisted the impulses of the governing power, and refused to follow it in its course of evil; but here the very associations by which the mind of society will be chiefly expressed will be given over to blasphemy.

"*And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard.*"] The leopard is used in Daniel vii. to symbolize Greece. Subtility as well as elegance marks the leopard. Antichrist will not only have the moral and intellectual characteristics of Greece, he will also arise from the Greek, not the Latin, part of the Roman empire. This we learn from Daniel viii. See that chapter considered in "Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman Empire."

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"*His feet were as the feet of a bear.*"] "Feet" is an emblem continually used in Scripture as a moral symbol. Thus of the Lord it is said, "His feet were as fine brass, as though they burned in a furnace"; and the saints are exhorted to have their "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

The savage character of Antichrist is frequently referred to in the Scripture. "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness and destroyed the cities thereof, that opened not the houses of his prisoners?" (Isaiah xiv.)

In Daniel, we find him called "a king of fierce countenance who shall destroy wonderfully"; (Dan. viii. 23), and in Daniel xi. 41, we have an account of his triumphant warfare.

In Zechariah too, where he is described, not as a warrior, but as the pretended shepherd of Israel, we find still the characteristics of the bear. "Lo! I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still; but he shall eat the flesh of the fat and tear their claws in pieces." (Zech. xi. 16.)

VERSE 5.

"*And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great and blasphemous things; and authority was given unto him to act forty-and-two months.*"] I have already

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spoken of the forty-and-two months as identical with the 1260 days elsewhere mentioned and "the time, times, and half-a-time" of Daniel; "*time*" being the expression used in Hebrew to indicate the period between one set annual feast of the Jews and another, as from Passover to Passover, or Pentecost to Pentecost.

The subject of this chapter is not the history of Antichristian principles (*they* were working before the Revelation was written); it is the history of THE Antichrist. It could be said of none other than an individual person, that he shall be "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." (See Rev. xix. 20.)

Moreover, though the principles of Antichrist have existed in their scattered form from the Apostle's days to our own, yet they are not brought into that *systematized* form in which they will be presented to the world when he himself arises into his proper power. His system is coeval with himself—indeed he is even obliged to destroy another *system* which he had previously sustained, in order to make way for his own. Consequently, if this chapter were the history of Antichristianism as a system, instead of that of Antichrist as an individual, the interpretation would not be less definite or less restricted. The history of his system could not be extended over a lengthened period, any more than that of his own personal existence.

There are three references to Daniel vii. in this

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chapter which should be noticed, as showing that the little horn of Daniel, and the beast of this chapter, symbolize the same person.

Dan. vii. 8. A mouth speaking great things.
Rev. xiii. 5. A mouth speaking great and blasphemous things.

Dan. vii. 21. The same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them.
Rev. xiii. 7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.

Dan. vii. 25. They shall be given into his hand until a time, times, and the dividing of time.
Rev. xiii. 5. Authority was given unto him to act forty and two months.

"*To blaspheme his name and his tabernacle,*" &c.] Heaven is the tabernacle or dwelling-place of God. Heaven, even the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's; and seeing that Antichrist, though he may rule the earth, cannot attain unto the dwelling-place of God, the only thing that he can do is to revile it, and those that dwell therein.

We must remember that although σκηνή (tabernacle) is often applied to a moveable habitation, yet that it does not *necessarily* imply transitoriness. We

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find it sometimes applied to things which are expressly said to be everlasting.

Thus in Luke xvi. 9, "That they may receive you into everlasting *habitations*." It was the desire of David that the ark of God should no longer dwell in curtains (2 Sam. vii.), but have a stationary habitation. In Acts vii. 46 this is referred to, and it is said that he desired to find a *tabernacle* (σκήνωμα) for the God of Jacob. The corresponding Hebrew word is used in Psalm cxxxii. 5, and is there translated *habitation:* "Until I find *an habitation* for the mighty God of Jacob." See also Isaiah xxii. 16, "That graveth an *habitation* for himself in a rock." These instances are sufficient to show that both in the Old and New Testaments this word is often used in a sense quite opposed to transitoriness.

If we turn to the Hebrews, we there find that Jesus is said to be the minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord hath framed (ἔπηξεν), and not man; and again, it is said to be a "greater and more perfect tabernacle (*i.e.* than the first), not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation"; and immediately after, this tabernacle is said to be the heavens. In this case, therefore, an eternal sense strongly attaches to "tabernacle," for His place of ministration is as enduring as Himself.

We cannot, therefore, after reading the ninth of Hebrews, feel any difficulty in saying that heaven is, in a very peculiar sense, the tabernacle of God. Whilst the outward Israel have no tabernacle, we

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have; and it is heaven—the place where our Priest ministers, even as in the holiest of all. At present, the inner court of this heavenly tabernacle alone exists, but the second, *i.e.* the heavenly city, will be added in due time, and that too is called the tabernacle of God. (See Rev. xxi. 3.) Transitoriness does not attach here.

Whether, therefore, we understand tabernacle in this more specific sense, or whether we take it in the general sense of "habitation," it equally designates heaven: and the sense of transitoriness is in either case to be excluded.

"*To make war with the saints*," &c.] These are they who are mentioned in the concluding verse of the preceding chapter, as "the rest of the woman's seed." In Daniel they are called "saints of the high places" (עליונין)—their prospective name of glory. In the Revelation they are described as those "who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus"; and again, as those "that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." (Rev. xiv. 12.)

Some have strangely endeavoured to explain the words, "having the testimony of Jesus," as meaning something short of proper Christian testimony. Will they similarly explain the words of 1 Cor. i. 6, "Even as the testimony of Christ hath been steadfastly maintained amongst you"? (ἐβεβαιώθη ἐν ὑμῖν).

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The saints here mentioned are afterwards described as standing on the sea of glass, singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb; and again, as reigning with Christ a thousand years (ch. xx.). Yet some, who maintain the false doctrine of a plurality of resurrections at the commencement of the millennium, exclude these saints from the Church of the first-born; and take from the Church her highest earthly honour of bearing testimony for her Lord during the hour of Satan's chiefest triumph. Hence their effort to depreciate these saints whom it is one especial object of this Book to honour.

"*And authority was given him over every kindred, and people, and tongue, and nation.*"] This language of universality is, in the Scripture, always used of or by the four empires and their monarchs. Indeed we are always accustomed to speak of the Chaldæan, Persian, Greek and Roman empires as "*Universal*" empires, not as meaning that they absolutely ruled every nation on the earth (for of the greater part of the earth they knew nothing,) but as meaning that they possessed a power with which no other nations on the earth could successfully compete. Their power was paramount till their appointed course was run.

Examples of universal expressions thus used may be seen in the following passages:

I. Of Nebuchadnezzar it is said, "Thou, O king,

art a king of kings, for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory; and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them ALL." (Daniel ii. 37.)

And again, "Nebuchadnezzar the king unto all peoples, nations and languages, that dwell in ALL the earth." (Daniel iv. 1.)

II. Cyrus of Persia says, "The Lord God of heaven hath given me ALL the kingdoms of the earth." (Ezra i. 2.)

III. Of the Grecian empire it is said, "A third kingdom of brass which shall bear rule over ALL the earth." (Daniel ii. 39.)

IV. Of the fourth or Roman empire it is said, "that it should devour the WHOLE earth." (Dan. vii. 23.) And again, "there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that the WHOLE WORLD should be taxed."

We cannot wonder, therefore, that similar expressions of universality should be applied to Antichrist as the last inheritor of the power of these mighty empires. That his power will not be *absolutely* universal, is shown by the express statements of Scripture itself; for Moab, Edom and the chief of the children of Ammon (see Dan. xi.), and the vast Gog and Magog nations mentioned in Ezekiel xxxviii., although so closely bordering on his dominions, are not to be brought under his control:

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besides which, he would not be symbolized by a *ten-horned* beast, if his authority were more extensively established. The ten kingdoms, however, will be the world in miniature, and hence another reason for the universality of the expressions.

"*And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him—he whose name hath not been written, from the foundation of the world, in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain.*"] In what sense could these words be applied to Popery, or any other system, or individual that yet has been? It should be observed that the words, "from the foundation of the world," are connected with "written," and not with "the Lamb that hath been slain." Compare Rev. xvii. 8: "Whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world." Christ is called "the Lamb fore-ordained;" but it is not scriptural to say, that *he hath been slain* from the foundation of the world.

"*If any one be for captivity, he goeth away* (*i.e.* into captivity); *if any one will kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.*"] The saints will be greatly tempted, no doubt, to resist Antichrist by violent means. But they must remember these words. If any one be appointed for captivity, into captivity he must surely go; and it is well for him to submit his neck meekly to the yoke. But if any shall say,

Nay! but I will resist with the sword, such an one by the sword shall fall. God will not sanction such resistance. Christ was the impersonation of good, and He was not to be defended by the sword: Antichrist will be the impersonation of evil; nevertheless, he is not to be resisted by the sword. The feet of the saint must be shod only with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Well may it be said of such circumstances,—"Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints."

"*He had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*"] This is said of the second beast who ministers in the presence of (*ἐνώπιον*) the great secular monarch. "Coming events," it has been said, "cast their shadows before;" and this is peculiarly true in the progress of evil. The Papacy has often assumed the form of lamb-like gentleness, and pretended to be the messenger of peace and love; yet who that has had the ear of faith, has not been able to detect under its smoothest pretensions, the voice of the dragon? And as the system of latitudinarian liberalism forms itself, we shall see this still further exemplified. It will speak abundantly of philanthropy, brotherhood, peace, cessation from ungainly strife, and the like; it will assiduously imitate the lamb, but the voice of the dragon will be there, full of all enmity to the distinguishing truths of Christ and to those who uphold them.

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"*And cause that whosoever would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*"] Although this will be the behest of the miraculous image endowed with breath that it might speak and issue this command, yet it by no means follows that its decree will be successfully carried into effect. Daniel was not harmed by the decree of Nebuchadnezzar; nor could Jezebel destroy all the prophets of the Lord. Obadiah hid a hundred; and when Elijah thought he was alone, there were yet seven thousand others who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

As regards the number of the beast, which his servants will bear as his device, I see no reason to doubt that it is literally 666—six units, six tens, six hundreds or six thrice repeated. Seven is the number of God's perfectness; six the number of human effort. For six days men labour. When the end of their thrice repeated efforts shall be seen, and they shall have done all they can do, a world groaning under the power of Antichrist and the devil, and madly worshipping an idol, shall be the result.

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CHAPTER XIX.

On Revelation XIV.

In the preceding chapter we have seen the mighty nations of the prophetic earth (those nations which from the day that the throne of David was overthrown in Jerusalem (Dan. i. 1) to the present hour have, by the appointment of God, been pre-eminent in the earth, supreme in power, and supreme in glory, even as they will be till the Son of David shall return)—we have seen them in the preceding chapter subject, gladly and willingly subject, to the power of evil, worshipping the Dragon and worshipping the beast, saying, "who is like unto the beast, who is able to make war with him?" In the thirteenth chapter no interference on the part of God is mentioned. Evil appears to reign, as if God had forsaken the earth, and allowed the throne of wickedness to be established in undisturbed supremacy.

But it is far otherwise. God will plead with men both in testimony and judgment, and this the fourteenth chapter reveals. It tells us how the clusters

of the vine of the earth will be cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God—the doom of apostasy. It speaks also of the harvest to be reaped from those countries where professing Christianity will yet be found. But before it makes mention of these things, true to the manner in which Scripture is ever wont to speak of the concluding blessing before it declares the sorrow that precedes, it reveals the earthly seat of that new and heavenly power whereby the earth and all the things therein will be ordered, when the reign of wickedness and the hour of judgment shall have passed away, and the mountain of God be established in holy supremacy over all nations.

"I saw the Lamb standing on Mount Sion." No words can contrast more strongly with all that the preceding chapter had revealed. It is no longer the ten-horned beast with the form of a leopard, and the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion, holding by the dragon's gift the dragon's throne; but it is the Lamb upon Sion, the mountain of God's power, the mountain of God's holiness; the same Lamb that had before been seen in the midst of the throne, the Lord of all its glory—the same who is to feed the flock of God in their heavenly fold, and to lead them unto living fountains of waters; even at that same moment when "they who worship the beast and his image shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation. And the smoke of thei

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torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

It requires but little knowledge, either of the world or of Jesus, to be able to contrast Him and His character with the ways and character of that wicked one who precedes Him in the throne of the earth's glory. The Roman world with all its greatness will willingly wait upon the great destroyer; but when Jesus came into the midst of it, meek, lowly, and having salvation, it gave Him nothing at first, not even a place where to lay His head; and when at length it did open its hand to give, it gave the scourge, the thorns, the vinegar, the gall and the cross. But He came to be the heir of suffering. The leopard's graceful form could not symbolize Him, whose visage was more marred than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; the mouth of the lion of Babylon could not be an emblem for Him, who was "meek and lowly of heart," who did not "strive nor cry, neither did any hear His voice in the streets;" the feet of a bear could not symbolize the good Shepherd, who said, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep;" who "came not to destroy men's lives, but to save." To make self his idol—to depreciate God and man, that he may exalt himself—to be deaf to the general groan of creation, and heedless of the cry of the widow and the fatherless, the sigh of the oppressed and

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of the prisoner—to lay the foundation of his greatness in the miseries and sins of men, and to draw the halo of glory around his single brow, is the object of Antichrist. He comes from beneath; his origin is from the pit (chap. xi. 7): and yet he says "I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." But Jesus whose home was in the Father's bosom, seeking Another's glory and others' blessing, came into this living mass of corruption and suffering to find in it for Himself sorrow and death, that He might be to others life. The acuteness of His sensibilities, and the liveliness of His sympathy, which were necessary to His perfectness as man (for it pertains to man to feel), added poignancy to His sufferings. They made Him like a tender plant beneath a rude and inclement sky. But He lived not for Himself. He came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." His life has been taken from the earth; but His memorial is blessed for ever. And when the time shall come for Him to return from the pavilion of God, in which He is now hidden, and to stand upon *Zion* in possession of the government of earth, it will be as no unknown stranger, but as One who has been known, and proved, and found worthy—known in His eternal glory before the world was—known in

suffering and in death—known in the present exercise of the power of the almighty throne. He has been known by God, known by the Spirit of God also in His saints, and we are able to say that "He is worthy."

The purpose of the Lamb in again visiting the earth is to bring into it, and finally to establish in it, the glory and the holiness and the happiness of heaven. He has finished the work of atonement, and has sat down on the throne of the majesty in the heavens; but we wait for His return, in order that we may behold what the full manifested results of redemption are to be. The love which God hath to us is at present little evidenced by the things around us; little, I mean, in comparison with that hour when all things shall be heard giving thanks because He shall have opened His hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing. We know His love inwardly; it is "shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit," and inwardly we are comforted and strengthened. To our hearts secretly it is like dew upon the thirsty ground, or like ointment poured upon the burning wound. But these effects are hidden. They are secret in the heart, whilst everything around us groans; and we ourselves in unredeemed bodies, eat our bread with the sweat of our brow, from a ground that the Lord hath cursed. Thus, to the Spirit, it still is what it was to Jesus, the valley of the shadow of death, and all the fires that men kindle that they may warm themselves

in the sparks of their kindling, and say, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire," only add to the eye of faith new terrors to the scene. Nevertheless it is in this world that the glory and holiness and happiness of heaven is to be manifested and established. *Finally*, its establishment will be universal, for He will make ALL things new. But even in the millennium, whilst the present framework of this fallen creation remains, there is one spot in the earth where the righteousness, and joy, and blessedness of heaven will be perfectly found, and that spot is the height of Zion.

That Mount Zion, in connection with the earthly Jerusalem, which will be builded *around* it, will become the centre of the earth's legislation and government, and will be so acknowledged by all nations, is again and again declared in the Scripture. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall

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not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." (Isa. ii.)

But it is not its connection with God's earthly city, nor even its connection with the earthly throne of the Son of David, nor its recognised supremacy among the nations, that will give to Zion its great and distinguishing attribute of glory. It will be the place where *heavenly* glory will be made visible before the eyes of men. It will be the stronghold of Jerusalem's strength, because it will be the citadel* of the risen saints—the place of the presence of divine glory and omnipotent power.

When Israel came out of Egypt they were gathered around Mount Sinai. They were not indeed allowed to touch the mountain, but they were gathered at its foot. Their tents, clustering around it, sought, as it were, the shelter of its protection; and God as their Lawgiver and King, appeared in glory on it. "And it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud;

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* I use the word "*citadel*" designedly, because it is the expression used in Revelation xx. in order to denote the place occupied by the risen saints, in its relation to the earthly Jerusalem. "They compassed the citadel (παρεμβολὴν) of the saints about and the beloved city." It is the same word used in Acts xxii., where it is said, that the chief captain commanded Paul to be brought into "the castle" (παρεμβολὴν). This castle was built upon Zion, and was in fact "the citadel of David."

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so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether of a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up." Here indeed was the manifestation of divine glory upon the earth, quite as truly as when it shall again be manifested on the height of Zion. But there was no mediator of the new covenant there, no blood of sprinkling speaking peace, and therefore Israel found it to be the place of sorrow and of death. The ministration of death was there, though they knew it not. But though Israel has been disappointed in that shelter, and are now driven in confusion from it, it nevertheless reminds us of that happy and abiding refuge which Israel, and the nations too, will finally find under the true mountain of God—that mountain to which by faith we are already come, on which, as on Sinai of old, heavenly glory, but benign and blessed, because in the power of the accomplished redemption of Jesus, will again be made manifest. "The hill of God

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(Zion) is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan. Why leap ye, ye high hills? This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in, yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them as in Sinai in the holy place." Here is sufficiently plain evidence that Zion, like Sinai, will have the presence of something more than mere earthly glory; and in the twelfth of Hebrews also, after Sinai had first been mentioned as the place where God once manifested Himself in glory, Zion is next spoken of as the place of manifestation of the better and abiding glory. We are not come unto Sinai, but we "are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, a general assembly—and to the Church of the first-born enrolled in heaven," &c.

It will, doubtless, be the place over which heaven will be opened. The Lord has said that we shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending, as if the ladder of Jacob were abidingly and visibly resting upon this earth. We read of the heavenly city at the commencement of the millennium,* so descending as not to be in

* The first eight verses of the twenty-first chapter describe the heavenly city in its relation to the earth *after* the millennium, when the new heavens and new earth are created. The rest of the twenty-first chapter describes the relation of the heavenly city to the

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heaven (for it descendeth from God out of heaven); neither on the earth, for it does not descend to earth until the new heavens and the new earth are formed; yet we read of its glory being so manifested, that "the nations shall walk by means of the light thereof, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour unto it." In other words, it will be intermediate, as the holy place (to which it antitypically answers) should be, between the holiest of all, *i.e.* heaven, and the earthly court, which is the earthly Jerusalem. But Zion, miraculously exalted above the hills, as if to meet the heavenly city, which will rest over it in the heavens above, will be the place where heavenly glory will first be brought into real connection with this earth. It will be the citadel of the holy ones—the place where the foot of the ladder of Jacob may be said visibly to rest.

It is this earthly and yet heavenly condition of Zion that fulfils the promises of the Scripture, and harmonizes truths belonging to the earth with other truths referring to heavenly and unearthly glories. We cannot read the promises to Zion and to Jerusalem respecting their earthly supremacy in the latter days, without seeing that an earthly people shall dwell there, and earthly blessings be given there. "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for

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earth *during* the millennium, whilst nations who yet need healing will be found upon it. A new chapter, therefore, should be commenced at the ninth verse of chap. xxi.

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in my wrath I smote thee; but in my favour have I had mercy on thee . . . The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. . . . Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great king. Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following." These are descriptions of the earthly condition of this mountain of God: whereas when we read of the Lord being there, as in Sinai in the holy place, with thousands of angels—of the Lord dwelling in Zion—blessing out of Zion—strengthening out of Zion—of saviours coming up out of Zion to judge—of those who, going from one grade of glory to another, appear in Zion before God—and finally, when we here read of some standing with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, able to learn the song of those who sing before the throne in heaven (unspeakable words, doubtless, which it would not be possible for a man to utter), we have sufficient proof that he who can in this sense say that he has come unto Zion, must mean that he belongs to those

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whose glory is not of earth merely, but who can follow the Lamb *whithersoever* He goeth, whether in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath. So was it with Moses and Elias. On the Mount of Transfiguration they stood by the side of the Lord Jesus. They stood upon an earthly mountain, they were seen by earthly eyes, they spoke of earthly things. But they were not limited to earth, they entered into the bright cloud of glory, and departed into the heavens, and Jesus and His disciples were left upon the earth alone. Here is a clear intimation, therefore, that heavenly feet will tread this lower earth, yet able to follow the Lamb *whithersoever* He goeth; and this is the scene here revealed upon Mount Zion.

But in this passage our thoughts are directed to the persons manifested, and to their holy and blessed character, more than to the place or circumstances of manifestation. However excellent the offices and places of glory which God has appointed for the development of the coming blessings, yet such offices and places have in themselves no living power. Their efficacy for blessing depends upon the character and condition of the living persons to whom they are committed. What value would there be in kingship, unless held by Him who is "worthy of all power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing"? or what would priesthood be, apart from Him who brings into it the excellency of His own eternal person—the Son

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consecrated for evermore? Zion may be the appointed centre of government and power of all nations: but living men are needed to guide that power, and use it for its appointed end. And, therefore, the Lamb surrounded by a hundred and forty and four thousand (the complete number of instrumental agency), and they through Him made pure and holy as Himself—able to worship and able to serve according to the perfectness of heaven,—fulfilling in earth the will of their Father, *as* it is done in heaven, were seen standing upon Zion, occupying the height of the earth's new centre of authority and power. We read no longer as in the former chapter, of those dwelling upon the earth worshipping the beast; but of those redeemed *from* the earth, able, though standing on the earth, to repeat the song of heaven; bearing not the name of the beast, nor the number of his name; but having the name of the Lamb, and the name of His Father, written in their foreheads; "and in their mouth was found no falsehood, for they are without blemish." Such are the new persons into whose hands the authority of the earth is transferred—such are they, whose character and whose power will thenceforth fashion the ways of the inhabitants of earth. Yet, though holy, they will not be devoid of the knowledge, and sympathies, and experience, which they have had as men—they will remember that they have suffered being tempted; they will be mindful of it in their dealings with those who will

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still be dwelling in sinful bodies of fallen flesh. They have gentleness, and holiness, and the knowledge of redemption in the blood of Jesus, as they stand around *the Lamb*. In such we find the new and living centre of the earth's power. Thus it is that righteousness and praise shall spring forth before all the nations, and "the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." (Isa. xxxii. 17).

But this is an anticipated scene, true, indeed, and faithfully to be accomplished in its season. But the night is not yet spent: the morning is not yet come: we must turn back again for a season to "the lions' dens and the mountain of the leopards," the proud seats of ungodly Gentile power, and see the earth in its darkness and distance from God. We must revert to the dark scenes which this Book also unveils, in order to see the condition of those, in the midst of whom God begins to make manifest His power.

This is the principal subject of the fourteenth chapter, from the sixth verse inclusive to the close. Its object is not to detail the condition of the nations, but to describe the manner in which God begins to act in the midst of them, first in testimony, and then in judgment, when the cup of their iniquity has been filled to the full. Its statements, or rather intimations (for they are little more), from the sixth verse to the end, are consecutive, but brief; and, as to time, indeterminate, the period

being not fixed either as to its commencement or duration. But the character of the events is clear, and their order. It is an outline merely; but it is drawn by the hand of God, and is only the more clear because unencumbered by detail. A preaching of the everlasting gospel among the apostate nations *—a testimony against Babylon and a declaration of its doom,†—a testimony against the beast and his worshippers ‡—an intimation that the time is come for the saints to enter into their rest and to receive their reward §—the reaping of the harvest ‖—and then the gathering of the vintage ¶—these are the subjects of the chapter from the sixth verse to the end: and in all the instances which imply active interference on the part of God, these events may be regarded as following each other, just in the order in which they are mentioned.

The first is evidently an act of peculiar long-suffering mercy. "I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven having the everlasting Gospel to preach to those who were settled (*καθημένους*) upon the earth, and to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

Such is the merciful intervention of God, when

* From verse 6 to 7 inclusive.
† Verse 8.
‡ From verse 9 to 12 inclusive.
§ Verse 13.
‖ From verse 14 to 16 inclusive.
¶ From verse 17 to end.

men (throughout the prophetic earth at least) are either denying or are about to deny even the creative power of God: when the heaven, and the earth, and the things that are therein, will cease to be regarded as the works of His hands. But being gracious, and merciful, and slow to anger, and not desiring that any should perish, but rather that they should come to repentance, He sends this warning—and not only this warning, but the message of the everlasting Gospel too, even into the midst of His enemies. It is called "everlasting," because throughout every age, and in the midst of this age's darkest evil, it continues unshaken and unchanged; still opening, in all the freedom of exhaustless grace, the door of mercy to him who shall repent and believe. "Men and brethren, through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and through him all who believe are justified from all things." The sphere into which this message will be peculiarly sent will be the prophetic earth.* The time, the period which immediately precedes the full development of Antichristian blasphemy; and the means, though symbolized in the vision by an angel, will be living men, whose mouths will be open to make

* The words are nearly the same as those which describe the extent of Antichrist's power in the preceding chapter. "Every tribe, and people, and tongue" (chap. xiii.) "Every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people" (chap. xiv.) There must be certainly some limitation to this testimony, because it is distinctly said, that when the Lord cometh there are "some in the isles afar off who have not heard his fame nor seen his glory." (Isa. lxvi. 19).

known throughout the appointed sphere this final declaration of mercy.

Another warning still more specific follows. It is a declaration of the doom of Babylon. Babylon has not yet been mentioned in the Revelation. This, her first mention, is the declaration of her fall. "Babylon hath fallen, hath fallen (ἔπεσεν), that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Her skill will minister joy to the nations. It will make them glad as with sweet wine; but it will turn out in the end to be the wine of wrath, and she who has given it shall fall, never to rise again. This is the testimony which the servants of Jesus will have to bear, whilst the cup of her pleasures is yet being ministered by her hand, even while she is saying, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." The word of faith will be, "Babylon *hath* fallen." It speaks of the future as if it were the past, and calls the things that be not as though they were. Such will be the testimony of the children of the kingdom then; such ought it to be anticipatively now, if peradventure some ears may be opened to hear and understand.

But the fascinations of Babylon are but the means of alluring onward into those deeper chambers of enchantment, wherein Satan will exult over his victims as enclosed within a fortress whose bars can never be broken. A third angel followed, saying with a loud voice, "If any man worship the beast

and his image, and receive his mark on his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation," &c. It will be the place of highest honour to worship the earth's great king, and to bear the insignia of his name: it will be the place of reputation and glory—to refuse it will be dishonour and ruin. It will be a hard thing for one who has already drunk deeply of the cup of Babylon's joy, to withstand the fascination of the yet more glorious scene that follows. It will be hard even for saints; nevertheless they shall be strengthened to resist the seductions of that fearful hour, and to meet the penalties of their resistance; for it is written, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." It will be a season of bitter trial; but it will be for the last time—for immediately a voice is heard from heaven, saying, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, FROM HENCEFORTH; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for their works do follow them": in other words, the time had now come for Jesus "to take unto him his great power, and to reign; and the time of the dead, that they should be judged; and that he should give reward to his servants the prophets, and to them that fear his name, small and great, and that he should destroy them who destroy the earth."

Accordingly, as soon as the voice saying, "Blessed

are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth," as soon as this voice had passed, a white cloud is seen; and "upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a crown of gold, and in his hand a sharp sickle." He comes in glory and in divine majesty, seated on the clouds, and with the crown of victory on His brow; but He comes still as the servant of the Most High God; and therefore an angel comes forth from the temple that was seen in heaven, the symbol of the place of God's government towards the earth, and cried with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, "Thrust in thy sickle and reap, for the time is come for thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped." We are not here taught as to the means employed by the Son of man to give effect to that power here symbolized by the sickle. But from another part of Scripture, we learn that the reapers are the angels. "In the time of harvest, *I will say* to the reapers, Gather ye together, first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." (See Matt. xiii.)

The wheat field, mingled though it be with tares, does not include either idolatrous heathen or blaspheming Jews. They are not wheat; neither have they, as tares, ever been sown among the wheat. Neither will the wheat field represent those who will, when the Lord returns, be found in the open re-

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jection of the name of God and of Christ, and worshippers of a man. Mahommedans, at this present hour, though not arrived at the height of Antichrist's blasphemy, are neither tares nor wheat. The symbol for such infidels is, "thorns which cannot be taken with hands; but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place"—such is the symbol of apostate infidels; but they are not represented by wheat or tares of the harvest field. The harvest field is an emblem that belongs to Christians alone. Blades of wheat, it is true, may be seen here and there springing up among the thorns and briars that are now covering Egypt and the East, and tares may be found there also; but this does not give to Egypt and to Turkey, even in the estimate of man, the character of Christendom. They are known as apostate nations, having a responsibility and judgment peculiar to themselves.

So will it be when the Lord returns. The nations of the prophetic earth, the great and civilized and prospering nations of the earth, will be no longer bearing the name of Christian. They will have willingly rejected it, and taken upon themselves the name of another. Infidelity, like a flood (for the sluices of iniquity will suddenly be opened, even as in a moment), will spread over the whole face of the Roman world. Thorns, more stout and more terrible than ever have been seen in those parts of

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the prophetic earth which have already apostatised from Jesus, will be found spread over these nations from end to end. And even though blades of wheat and scattered tares may here and there be seen amidst the mass, yet, even in the estimate of men, these nations will have changed their character, and have ceased to bear the name of Christendom among men. They will have a responsibility and a judgment of their own.

Profession of the name of Jesus is that which, to the eye of man,* marks the extent of the harvest field of wheat and tares. The vast districts which are now bearing the name of Christ in India, America, Australia, Africa, and in the north and east of Europe, will still be retaining, when the Lord returns, the profession of His name; and, doubtless, each day will add something to the progress of supposed—it may be real—Christianity. God will sow good seed, and Satan will continue to intermingle tares. But the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal—"The Lord knoweth them that are his." His eye will be able to distinguish

* I say to the eye of man; because I doubt not that there are many within the limits of baptized Christendom who are as ignorant of what the truth of God really is, as if they had been born in heathenism. They who have never had the opportunity of gaining, either from the Scripture, or from faithful preaching, any knowledge of truth, so as for their consciences to apprehend it, will not, I think, be judged as tares, even though found within the limits of professing Christendom. Multitudes, for example, in Russia and various parts of Europe, are in as deep ignorance as if the Bible had never been given, and a preacher never sent.

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between the unenlightened heathen, the wheat, the tare, and the thorn; and even as it is ever His principle that judgment should begin with that which bears the responsibility of the name of God, so, as soon as He descends into the air, and the earth is spread before Him to receive the hour of its visitation, His first act will be to judge that which is bearing His name. "Judgment begins at the house of God." Christendom will be the first subject of His visitation. He will send forth His angels, and they will separate the tares from the wheat. The wheat shall be gathered into His garner, but the tares will be cast into the burning.

But after the harvest is over, the vintage yet remains. And where are we to look for the vine of the earth—where but in those countries in which, from the days of Nimrod to the present hour, the energies of man have been put forth to train something, which the fostering hand of Antichrist will at last mature: but when it is matured, its ripened clusters, which will be many, will be found suited only to the wine-press of the wrath of God. I have said enough of what the great king of the earth will be, in the preceding chapter. The vine of the earth may be judged of from what he is, for it is his plant, the object of his care, and the minister of his joy; nor can it surprise us (if we remember what man is) that they, who in the estimate of God are thorns, fit for the burning, should by the eye of man be wondered at, as the beautiful clusters of the earth's fairest plant.

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The place of the wine-press was without the city. It is to "the Valley of Jehoshaphat"—"the Valley of Decision" that the kings of the earth and their armies, who will first have been gathered to Armageddon, will finally be led. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of judgment, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of judgment." It will, doubtless, be the fairest scene of collected glory that the earth has ever witnessed: for what kings so mighty as the last ten sovereigns of the prophetic earth, and what monarch so glorious as that monarch of monarchs under whom and around whom they serve? But they, and all who follow in their train, will be but as clusters that have ripened for the vintage. "Their vine is of the vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps."* There is One who will gather them and tread them in the wine-press of the wrath of God. But neither the manner of their being trodden, nor the person who treads them is here described. The time for the description of this has not yet come; and, therefore, here again, as in former chapters, the vision closes, and in the next chapter a new vision begins.

* These words are from Moses' prophetic song in Deuteronomy, when describing the condition of Israel in the latter day.

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CHAPTER XX.

Notes on Rebelation XIV.

"*And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand having his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.*"] I have already remarked on the diversity of symbols by which the various glories of the Church of the first-born have been expressed in preceding visions. In the fourth chapter, for example, one part of their glory is represented by the throned elders; whilst another is symbolised by the living creatures or cherubim. Again, in the seventh chapter, one of their places in glory is represented by the elders and cherubim *around* the throne; another by the countless multitude praising *before* the throne. Again, in this chapter, the elders and cherubim *around* the throne; the harpers harping with their harps *before* the throne; and the hundred forty and four thousand on Mount Zion below, able to learn the song sung in heaven above, are *three* varied expressions of the Church's manifold glory. Indeed, when our present condition in earth is

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described, language is almost exhausted to express the various relations in which we stand to the Lord, even here, before the scene of our suffering militancy is closed. We are called brethren, children, servants, wife, sister, guests at the marriage supper, virgins, a kingdom, kings, priests, an offering, a temple, temples, &c., &c. So also with the Lord Himself—He is Priest, King, Temple, Altar, Victim, Mercy-seat, everything. It is no wonder, therefore, that various and apparently contradictory symbols should be used to express the various positions of the Church, when manifested in glory as "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." The Lord may and will occupy the throne of His father David in Jerusalem; but He will not, therefore, cease to be one with Him who sitteth on the throne of the majesty of the heavens. On that throne He has taken His seat for ever (Heb. x.), and He will ever be regarded as the possessor of its glory, even though He may be pleased to occupy other positions of inferior excellency in the heavenly city, and on the height of *Zion*, and in Jerusalem. Unless, therefore, we should deny that the Church would hold power on the earth at all, the very place which we should expect them to occupy would be the height of *Zion*, for *Zion* is confessedly to be made the centre of the earth's government. Angels accompanied God to Sinai—angels and saints will surround Christ on *Zion*. See Psalm lxviii. 15, &c.

It is true that the condition of Israel in Jerusalem

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will, as to every thing that is *essential*, closely resemble that of the saints in glory. Peter, and John, and James on the Mount of Transfiguration were heirs of the very same glory as Moses and Elias, although the latter were standing in circumstances into which the disciples had not yet entered: and the dissimilarity would have been still less if the disciples had received the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Converted Israel in the millennium will, no doubt, be entitled to bear many of the names which are in this passage applied to the Church of the first-born in their heavenly glory. For example, they may be called "virgins"; as washed in the blood of the Lamb they will be regarded as "without blemish"; and of them it is peculiarly said, that "they shall come and sing in the height of Zion." These resemblances have led some to ask whether Israel may not be represented by the 144,000 here seen around the Lamb. But it must be remembered that although some of the expressions of this passage may apply to saints whilst yet in the flesh, yet this is not true of every part of the description; and that even those expressions which admit of such application must, if so used, be used in a moderated sense—and not in that fulness of meaning which attaches to them in this passage. When we speak of any *here* being pure and without blemish, we speak of them as they are regarded in the judicial estimate of God, because of the blood which has sanctified them; but there are further

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thoughts connected with these words when we speak of the full results of redemption to be attained in glory—and such are the thoughts to be connected with them, when used, as they are in this passage, of those who are not merely redeemed out of (ἐκ) but away from (ἀπό) the earth, and who are able to follow the Lamb WHITHERSOEVER He goeth; words which could not be applied to millennial Israel. Besides, those who are here described are termed "firstfruits"—the very thing which Israel are not. The Church of the first-born who rise in the first resurrection are, during the millennium the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb; and Israel follow, as *later* fruits from the same harvest field. Moreover, if the manifestation of heavenly glory on the Mount of Transfiguration is to be regarded as indicating the manner in which intercourse is hereafter to be established between God and the earth on *Zion*, we find, it is true, persons who were yet unglorified admitted to that holy mountain, but it was to behold others admitted into a glory into which at that time *they* could not enter. Just so will it be with Israel. They will come to the height of *Zion* and will worship there; but they will not be able, as the 144,000 who are redeemed from the earth, to learn the unspeakable words of the song that is sung in the presence of the throne above; neither will they be able to follow the Lamb *whithersoever* He goeth.

The application of the number 144,000 to Israel in

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the earth, and to the Church above, is just what we might have expected to indicate the completeness of agency that will then be found, not merely in an earthly, but in a heavenly body likewise. Thus also the number *twelve* is applied to the earthly and to the heavenly city; but this does not prove identity between the two, though it may prove resemblance. The usage of the article also is very strict in the Revelation. When a new person or object, not mentioned before, is spoken of, it is omitted; but if identity is to be marked with that which has been mentioned before, it is inserted. Thus when the Lamb is mentioned for the first time in chapter v. it is omitted; but in every other place where He is afterwards spoken of (in all twenty-six) it is inserted; but where the word is otherwise used, as in chapter xiii. 11, it is omitted. So also when the twenty-four elders are first mentioned in the fourth chapter, the article is omitted; whenever they are subsequently mentioned it is inserted. The same may be said of the living creatures. Another remarkable instance is, that when the throne is first mentioned in the fourth chapter, the article is omitted, but whenever afterwards *that* throne is referred to, the article is inserted; but when another throne is mentioned, viz. the great white throne in chapter xx., the article is omitted. The same is the case as to the lesser thrones on which the elders sit. When first mentioned the article is not found; when referred to, it is inserted; but when afterwards other

thrones are mentioned, as in chapter xx. 4, it is omitted. It is not likely therefore that a rule so carefully observed should be departed from in this instance. If identity with the previously mentioned 144,000 were intended, the article would have been inserted.

A heavenly as well as an earthly character is thus given to *Zion*; and this enables us to explain many parts of Scripture which otherwise would be inexplicable, as well as to meet that universal feeling of Christians, which has ascribed heavenly rest and glory to *Zion*. I scarcely need refer to the multitude of hymns which crowd our hymn books in evidence of this,—"O *Zion*, when we think of thee," &c. It is quite true that it is one of the spheres of the Church's glory, though by no means the highest. The system of *Zion* also, represented by the woman in the twelfth chapter, is now on the earth suffering, and therefore we are also able to sing, "O *Zion*, afflicted with wave upon wave," &c. It is important to add to our previous store of truth, but in doing this we should be careful not to detract from, or deny, that which we already have.

"*And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as a voice of great thunder.*"] The mention of this in connection with the voice of the harpers harping with their harps, invests their song with a character altogether superhuman and heavenly, and would not allow us to think that they

who could learn this song, could be any longer in the body. The glorified saints on *Zion* will first evidence what it is for God's will to be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

"*For they are virgins.*"] The Church is continually represented by feminine symbols: as, for example, "the bride of the Lamb." The 144,000 are represented as a female company, but the use of masculine adjectives, etc., such as *οἱ ἠγορασμένοι*, gives them a mystic character.

They must not be confounded with "the virgins" mentioned in Psalm xlv. In that psalm, some seer of Israel in the millennium is describing the earthly state and glory of the Messiah the King; and also the beauty and excellency of the daughter of His people—the daughter of Jerusalem who stands by the side of the great King, as His queen, in gold of Ophir. He exhorts "the daughter of his people" to forget her father's house and everything that is past, and to remember only her new dignity. He describes the state and dignity of her nuptial train; attended by virgins, such as the daughter of Tyre and the "daughters of the famous nations," (Ezek. xxxii. 18), who as so many princesses, ("king's daughters") shall enter into the palace, and become "honourable women" to the King and to herself. In other words, the great nations of the earth will wait upon Jerusalem and her King. The Church is only once mentioned in this psalm, and that in the

seventh verse, as being "His fellows"—"God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

"*Before the throne.*"] These words should be omitted. They are clearly an interpolation. (See Tregelles.)

"*Worship him that made the heaven,*" *&c.*] This warning is given when even the *creative* power of God is being, or about to be, denied. After the Lord has come and forgiven Israel, we find them in one of their earliest songs of praise, singing to God as the Creator. "The Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it, and his hands prepared the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." This is a song well suited to the lips of those who are just emerging from the hour of Antichristian blasphemy. (Ps. xcv.)

"*Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth,*" *&c.*] I have elsewhere noticed the abstract force of the present participle. Οἱ ἀποθνήσκοντες does not mean those who *are* dying, or those who *have* died, but is used in an abstract and collective sense as denoting the whole class of those to whom "falling asleep in Christ" attaches as their characteristic. The Church *as a whole* is

here spoken of. Individually, each saint may be said to be blessed in a measure, and to rest from his labours, when his spirit departs hence to be with Christ; but the whole Church does not receive its blessedness, nor rest from its labours, until the time comes for these words to be uttered, "Blessed are they *from henceforth*."

"*Like unto the Son of man.*"] The Lord had before been termed the Son of man in connection with the churches, when walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. It is a name, in the title of which He executes judgment in the earth. In the former case, when judging the churches as to their condition on the earth, His garment was priestly, and no crown was on His brow. But now that He comes in power to enforce His title over the earth, He is seen with the cloud as the emblem of divine majesty and power, and with the crown of victory on His head.

This verse, which describes the reaping of the harvest field, may be said to be the only place in which Christendom is distinctively referred to in the prophetic part of the Revelation; for it is Christendom, and Christendom alone, that constitutes "the harvest field" in this present dispensation. See parable of the wheat and tares, in Matthew xiii.

The earth at the period of our Lord's return into it may be thus divided:

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I. Christendom; that is, those countries which retain the profession of the name of Christ.

II. The Apostate or Antichristian nations; *i.e.* the nations of the Roman world, which, after being acquainted with the names of God and of Christ, will deliberately reject both, and worship Antichrist.

III. Heathen nations.

IV. Israel, who will be partly in their own land, partly scattered.*

To give a *general* view of the difference between the three first of these divisions, it would be sufficient to take a map of the world, and if the nations of the Roman earth be coloured *red*, the rest of the nations now professing the name of Jesus *blue*, the heathen *black*, and the Mahommedan *yellow*, it would indicate the difference that will exist between these several portions of the earth. It would not, however, do more than give us a *general* view; because the real extent of Christendom is determined, not by fixed geographical limits, as in the case of the ten kingdoms of the Roman earth, but by moral limits, which necessarily fluctuate. Nevertheless, as regards the condition of nations, this general view is sufficiently precise. It is not likely that many more

* To these divisions might be added probably a fifth, viz. the Mahommedan nations. I say *probably* because we do not *know* from the Scripture that the Mahommedan nations will continue to the end; but we do know this respecting the four divisions just given. Arabia, however, is to continue separate from the Roman nations under the descendants of Ishmael, and will probably continue Mahommedan.

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nations will profess Christianity before the Lord comes; so that where the black shade of heathenism now rests, there we may suppose it to remain; and therefore, if we mark the nations of the Roman earth with the mark of apostasy, and regard the rest of the professing nations as remaining in the condition in which they at present are, we shall have before us very nearly the condition of the nations when the Lord returns. Individual Christians, wheresoever placed locally, may be said to belong to the division of Christendom: the followers of Antichrist, wherever settled, to the Antichristian division: and heathens, to the heathen. The measure of the responsibility of individuals among these, God only can and will judge.

The object of the Revelation is not to treat of Christendom, but of that part of the earth which will have become apostate, both from God and from Christ, including Jerusalem. The Gospels, especially the Gospel of Matthew, is the part of Scripture in which we learn the state of Christendom when the Lord returns. The thirteenth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew are especially devoted to the history of Christendom; the latter especially describes its close. When it is said in Matthew xiii. that the Son of man shall gather out of "his kingdom all things that offend," &c., this must be referred to Christendom *only*, which alone at that time professes to be His kingdom. He will not gather out of the world generally all things that offend,

inasmuch as He will spare multitudes of the heathen, and many of the Jews, and bring them to a knowledge of His grace.

The vine remains after the harvest (*i.e.* both wheat and tares) is gathered from the earth. The vine of the earth is the name of the earth's fairest and choicest plant. Its roots will be in Jerusalem and the East, its branches will spread over all the nations of the prophetic earth. Its clusters will be fair and many; but they will afford no drink-offering fit for the sanctuary of the God of Israel. An angel was seen in the vision, coming from the altar, who had authority over fire — fire, especially that of the altar from which the angel came, being the great expression of the divine holiness. As being conversant therewith he views the clusters of the vine of the earth, and commands that they should be gathered for the wine-press of wrath. Another angel (not the Lord) gathers them and casts them into the wine-press.

The gathering the nations to the Valley of Decision, the place of the wine-press, is clearly mentioned in Joel as being the result of the providential agency of God,—an agency which in the Revelation is indicated by angels; Christ's action against these apostate nations commences when He cometh forth "to tread the wine-press." God, by agency similar to that which He now employs, gathers them to Armageddon, and afterwards to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and then Christ is sent forth to

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trample them in wrath. The result of that trampling is referred to in this chapter; but no description either of Him who treads the wine-press, nor of the manner of treading it, is here given. That is reserved until the nineteenth chapter.

"*The wine-press was trodden without the city.*"] That is, Jerusalem; for the Valley of Jehoshaphat is immediately under the walls of that city. There the river of blood will go forth: there "the fats will overflow, because the wickedness is great." Read the last of Joel as the description of this awful hour. So the times of the Gentiles will end.

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CHAPTER XXI.

On Revelation XV. and XVI.

THESE chapters should be read as one. They form one vision, and reveal those last inflictions of the wrath *of God*, which are immediately to precede the still more terrible hour of the wrath *of the Lamb*. The dealings of God (for the throne of God is, as I have before said, at present acting for Christ rejected and seated at God's right hand)—these specific dealings of God with a hardened and unrepentant earth will cease when the plagues of this chapter have been fulfilled. The seven vials are expressly said to be full of "the seven last plagues; because in them is completed the wrath *of God*"; not however the wrath of *the Lamb*. Commission to act is given to Christ as soon as the ministration of the vials ends. He will then quit the throne of the Father; the rod of His power shall be sent out of Zion, and He will rule in the midst of His enemies. Accordingly in this chapter, as soon as the secret power of the almighty throne had completed the gathering of Christ's enemies to Armageddon—those

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enemies who are to be made His footstool, we find Him saying, "Behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth His garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." The day of Christ begins when the vials terminate. Here however, as in all former visions, we find the revelation of the final blessing previous to the description of the judgments that precede. We hear the song of praise sung by the Israel of God on the safe and happy side of the sea that separates them from Egypt, before we read of the great Pharaoh of the earth, or of the vials of wrath poured out upon his kingdom.

The symbols of the sixteenth chapter are evidently drawn from Egypt. The plague of the great and noisome sore, and the turning the waters into blood, are clear memorials of the inflictions on Egypt; and the mad daring of those mighty hosts, who, after being gathered at Armageddon, impiously rush into conflict with the manifested glory of Christ (see chap. xix.), has once only, throughout the whole history of man, found its counterpart, when Pharaoh and the pride of Egypt's strength rushed deliberately into the waters in pursuit of those who were protected by the visible presence of the glory of God. These are the two occasions, and these alone, on which man has dared knowingly and deliberately to rush "upon the thick bosses of the buckler of the Almighty."

The earliest type also that we have of the re-

demption of the people of God—of their redemption by price and their effected redemption by the outstretched arm of power, is placed in Egypt. They were found there when the visitation on Egypt came. It came when the strength and glory of Egypt were at their height, and the people of God were in dishonour and suffering—when "the iron had entered into their soul." We might expect therefore that in such a vision as that which we are now considering, which describes the condition of the great nations of the earth, the places where intellect, and science, and refinement, and wealth, at the closing hour of the times of the Gentiles, will be bearing their fairest fruits—we might expect to see the impress of Egypt marked upon it all. Egypt has indeed enlarged her limits. She has "lengthened her cords, and strengthened her stakes." The name of Egypt, as well as the name of Sodom, is expressly given by God Himself to Jerusalem at that hour, and it may well be extended to all those countries over which will reign that second Pharaoh, whom God will raise up, that in him He may show His power, and that His name may be declared throughout all the earth. (Exod. ix. 16.)

But before the inflictions on Egypt are described, we have a vision of the glory of the heavenly part of the Israel of God,—persons who have been indeed as in the midst of the furnace, but who have overcome. "I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast,

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and over his image, and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God." They sang again the song of Moses; they sang also a new song—the song of the Lamb.

When Israel of old was called out of Egypt, part of their high calling in the earth was to be for and with the Lord against His enemies. The earth was teeming with corruption. The iniquity of the Amorites was full. There was not only the Egypt which they had left behind them, but there was before them also Edom, and Moab, and Amalek, and Philistia—nations who defiled the earth by their iniquities, and Israel was to be with the Lord, on the Lord's side, *His* host, against all His enemies. This was their calling — this, their proposed blessing. And accordingly, in the fervour of their early love—the love of their espousals, they sang with unhesitating readiness, "The people shall hear and be afraid, sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away." Blessed words indeed, yet to be accomplished in their season; but under other circumstances than Israel had then learned—for they had not yet learned themselves, they had not yet learned what man and the flesh is. They had not yet known that they who bear the vessels of the Lord, or fight His battles, must be themselves clean; and how can that be clean which is born of woman?

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Accordingly they sang the song, and failed. The bright prospect has not been realised. The inhabitants of Palestina, and the mighty men of Moab, and the dukes of Edom have been many times strong against Israel, and will be stronger than ever yet. Like Adam in Paradise, or Aaron's family in the beautiful robes of their early priesthood, or Solomon in his glory, Israel tasted of the joy of their high calling just for a passing moment, and then it vanished; and as far as man's eye can see, has vanished for ever.

But "the gifts and calling of God are unrepented of." An hour is coming when God will again assert His title, as King of nations. "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of the *nations* (*τῶν ἐθνῶν*); who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy, for all *nations* shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments have been made manifest." Such is the song sung by them who stand upon the sea of glass. It is not in dissociation from *them* that God makes Himself known as the "King of the nations." They are the people whom He has redeemed—whom He hath guided by His strength into His holy habitation; and they shall live to show forth His praises. He will have gathered them into a separation from the earth, of which Israel's separation from Egypt was but an imperfect shadow. It will be a separation dependent on nothing earthly, on no mere outward barrier of laws or ceremonies, or distinct position in the

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earth; but an eternal separation, wrought in virtue of that mighty power which raised Jesus from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.*

I have already remarked on the symbolic meaning of *being within* the sea of crystal. It indicates the possession of that heavenly purity, which we receive through Him who hath died and risen for us—a possession already ours in Him, though we are not yet personally entered into the heavenly places, and have not in this sense the harps of God yet committed to our hand. A similar meaning attaches to the "*standing thereupon.*" Whether the figure be taken from the place of Israel, standing on the brink of the sea which they had passed, or whether it refer to a superhuman standing on it (just as Ezekiel saw the throne of glory set upon the firmament of crystal), in either case it supplies the type of separation; for the sea, on the shores of which Israel sung, had severed them from Egypt; and the crystal firmament separated from everything beneath, the

* I am here confining myself to the heavenly part of the Israel of God; for they alone will be *actually* separated into heaven. But in principle these things will be quite as true of the earthly part of the family of God; just as we at this moment have secured to us the same blessings, and the same heavenly position, which belong to Him who has risen for us, and ascended into the heavens. The place of the risen saints in the millennium will be the sample of the kind of glory in which finally all the redeemed will be made to share; and therefore what is here spoken of the heavenly part of the family of God, will virtually describe the character and power of the separation which will attach to Israel on the earth, and they will be brought into it at the same time.

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throne that rested on it. In either case the purity of that sea of glass mingled with fire, marks the character that will attach to all the circumstances and condition of our being then; for we shall stand in the full personal possession of all that purity and holiness, in the power of which, as found in Christ our Saviour, we are separated unto God: for it is He who, being pure as the sea of glass, and holy as the fire of the altar, will have communicated to us of His own perfections, and made us partakers of His holiness.

It is thus that we, the risen Church of the first-born—the heavenly part of the Israel of God, separated into the possession of the same purity as that by means of which, as found in Christ, we are separated unto God, shall, emerging from that last abyss of Egyptian darkness, again awaken, after the dark night of thousands of intervening ages, the song of Moses, and again say, "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously;" and again hail Him as the King of nations. "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou art holy, for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments have been made manifest."

The earth in which these His judgments will have been made manifest will be before us—stricken and terrified, and in many parts, I suppose, desolated by destruction. The Wicked one, that mighty monarch of the earth, will just have been consumed with all the proud array of his strength around him. It will

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again be sung, "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sendest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" But the earth will still teem with nations; for though the Church be gone, and false professors be gone, and Antichristianism be gone, yet many peoples, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, will yet remain: Ethiopia, and Tarshish, and Pul, and Lud, and Javan, and isles afar off—all of them as to their national arrangements, and systems, and laws, to be smitten by the rod of power; and many an individual among them to be cast down or even destroyed. But though this will be an hour of vengeance—an hour when it will be truly said, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!"—yet it will be an hour that will end in the manifestation and triumph of grace. As redeemed, and having the mind of Christ, we are acquainted not only with the works, but also with the ways of the Most High God; and therefore, though we shall say that justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne (and a desolated earth will abundantly witness thereunto), yet we shall add also, that "mercy as well as truth shall go before his face." It would indeed be a bitter and sorrowful

thing if judgment and truth were to go forth unto victory, and mercy were not to follow as handmaid in the train; for what heart will not be stricken in that day? What heart, that is spared from destruction, will be proof against the manifested terrors of the Almighty? But there will be balm in Gilead then, and a physician there; and He shall speak peace to the afflicted people, though "He will bring down the high looks;" and thus, because of mercy rejoicing against judgment, princes shall come out of Egypt, and Ethiopia stretch out her hands unto God, and "Israel shall be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the earth; whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria, the work of my hands, and Israel, mine inheritance." It is with these prospects that we shall look down from the sea of glass, the place of our sanctuary, and contemplate the results of the power of Him whom we shall then salute as "the King of the nations." It will be an hour when Israel's history in earth shall commence anew, when separated unto God, not by fleshly ordinances, but by the life-giving power of Him who is the Son of the living God, they will never again find words of triumph die upon their lips, nor disappointment blight their expectations.

It will be the hour when the heart of widest philanthropy will see its desires answered. It is a right and happy thing to have the true philanthropy of God. It gives *Him* no joy to see the dark places of

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the earth full of the habitations of cruelty, nor to see the wickedness of man multiply and augment the ceaseless groan of creation. He loveth rather "to open His hand," as yet He will, and "satisfy the desire of every living thing." But He has reason for all His ways, and Wisdom will finally be justified of all her children. The rejection of Christ and of His truth will, as well as its coming exaltation, be for His glory: and the time of the rejection of Christ in His people is not yet passed. He can still say, "Why persecutest thou *me?*" The feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace are ever beautiful in His sight, but they are not beautiful in the sight of men. They are cast out of the synagogue, and in the street despised. But a time is coming when even men will say, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace"—when they shall be honoured in the city, and honoured in the field, blessed both in their going out and in their coming in. They will still be the feet of the meek and poor in spirit, for blessing cannot be where meekness is not; but they shall be connected with, and watched over by power, visibly glorious both in the heaven above, and in the earth beneath. They shall themselves belong to Zion—the earthly inhabitants of an earthly city; but they shall be watched over and be in spirit one with those who stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. It will be an hour when heavenly and glorified saints

will watch over and protect the ministration of truth in the earth, and then nations shall bow. But to forestall that hour—to anticipate the counsels of God—to seek to will into existence what God hath not willed—to ascribe to kingdoms whose diadems are resting, or will rest, upon the dragon's head, that power of diffusing blessing which God has reserved exclusively for those who here stand upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God—what is this but wilfulness, disobedience, and sin? The generation of wickedness has not yet passed away. Herod has not yet ceased to speak in the council hall, nor Caiaphas in the Sanhedrim; and these are not the voices that are likely to call the powers of earth into obedience to the King of nations. The most sincere philanthropy will work no work of blessing if it leads us to mistake between man and God; between the armies of the pit and the armies of the God of heaven. We ought indeed to love man—we ought to do good to all men—to be kind to the unthankful and the evil—to preach the word—to be instant in season and out of season—to carry the gospel, if we can, into all nations; but this is quite consistent with remembering what the *end* shall be, and with waiting for that promised agency from above, without which God's name will not be exalted above the nations, nor praised in the firmament of His power.

Accordingly this vision, as it proceeds, calls us from the heavenly scene with which it commences,

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to consider also the hour of the world's strength, and of the world's judgment, out of which they come who stand upon the sea of glass mingled with fire. The symbolic temple is again seen in the vision. It is the place of God's worship, and of God's government, unto which Israel and the earth would long ago have been brought, if Jerusalem and its rulers had heard the voice of Peter when he said, "Repent, and be converted, that (ὅπως ἄν) the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus." If Jerusalem had listened to these words, the Lord Jesus would have come, and God would have been known (as He yet will be) in visible glory in His own holy temple not made with hands, the Governor and Lord of the whole earth. But though Israel has not obeyed, and therefore God has not manifested His glory, He nevertheless retains His title to act (and it is this that the presence of His glory in the temple symbolizes), to act when He pleases, and as He pleases, towards Israel and the earth, on the title of the accomplished redemption of Jesus. But since He is not now owned, nor His lordship acknowledged, the temple, instead of being the place where happy and accepted worship ascends before the great King, and whence He dispenses His blessings, and sends forth the messengers of His mercy, becomes, instead thereof, the place in which He will prepare to resume the immediate governance of the earth, by sending forth the holy ministers of His

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righteous vengeance. Angels clothed in linen vestments, clear and bright with whiteness (*καθαρὸν καὶ λαμπρόν*), in token of their holy purity, and girded with golden girdles because strengthened for their work by divine excellency of power, are seen to issue from the temple with golden bowls in their hand. These bowls had surrounded the golden altar, they were destined for the services of the sanctuary—for offerings and libations to the God of Israel; but being useless as to this (for neither Israel nor the nations have been sanctified through faith in Jesus into the place of worship), the things which should have been for blessing are turned into a curse, and the bowls which might have been filled with the offerings of thanksgiving unto God are, in in default thereof, filled by Him with wrath, and the angels bear them forth from the sanctuary, and pour them out upon the people of His judgment.

Of the nature of these judgments little need be said. I doubt not that the declarations of this chapter will be minutely fulfilled. I doubt not that "a noisome and grievous sore shall fall upon the men who have the mark of the beast, and upon them who have worshipped his image,"—that the sea throughout the appointed sphere will become "as the blood of a dead man"—that the sun will "scorch men as with fire"—that the kingdom of Antichrist will be full of darkness and anguish, so that men will gnaw their tongues for pain, and "blaspheme the God of heaven because of their

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pains and their sores," though they will not repent of their deeds. I expect also that the Euphrates—the river which is the strength and the boast of that great city which will then be the centre of the earth's resources—I expect that that river will be visited, its strength smitten, and its streams dried up, in order that the way of those fierce Eastern nations might be prepared who are to give the first blow to the greatness of Babylon (see Jeremiah), and to commence that work which is never stayed again until she is fully swept with the besom of destruction. I expect also that unclean spirits—even the "spirits of devils, working miracles," by the immediate bidding of Satan, and Antichrist, and the False Prophet—acting by and in those systems which they three will then be sustaining in the earth, will go forth (commissioned by God also), throughout the length and breadth of the prophetic earth, that is, from the Euphrates to England, and will thence gather the kings of the earth and their armies, first to Armageddon, and then "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

We can picture to ourselves the barbarous myriads of Central Asia clustering around Babylon, and marking it for their prey. We can see the hosts of the West and of all the prophetic earth, summoned around their mighty and indignant leader, and resting for a short moment, in all the proud consciousness of hitherto undisputed greatness, at Armageddon. Like two dark thunder-clouds, they

are gathered against each other. The one rolls on and covers Babylon; the other, Jerusalem. Both cities quail before them; but here the terribleness of the terrible ends. They move no farther, for the day of man is past. The last angel pours forth his vial, and then came a great voice saying, "It is done." The earth is shaken; great Babylon comes in remembrance before God; the cities of the nations fall; and the day of the Lord comes. But its manifestation is not described. Here, as in former chapters, the vision ends; and in the next chapter a new vision begins.

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CHAPTER XXII.

Notes on Revelation XV. and XVI.

"*Seven angels, having the seven last plagues,*" *&c.*] Whenever angels are mentioned as being the agents, it is a sign that the present dispensational period in which *God is acting for Christ,* has not yet terminated, and that the saints are not yet exalted into the place of power. The outpouring of the vials will accomplish the wrath *of God*: then will follow, though it will be but for a brief season, the wrath *of the Lamb;* after which Jesus will reign in peace. He will sit down "upon *his own throne*;" and then, instead of angels being sent forth from the temple to minister plagues, saints attended by angels will issue thence—the ministers of joy and gladness to the whole creation of God.

The plagues of this chapter pertain to the 1260 days of Antichrist's power, and will commence probably near the conclusion of that period. They doubtless follow one another in quick succession, just as the plagues of Egypt, which they resemble. The plagues of Egypt commenced a very little while

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previous to the final visitation of Egypt and the final deliverance of the people of God.

That none of the vials are poured out before Antichrist has established himself in his glory, is manifest from this, viz. that the first vial is directed towards those who had the mark of the beast and those who worship his image. The image therefore must be seen before the *first* vial can be poured out.

"*A sea of glass, mingled with fire,*" *&c.*] In the fourth chapter, where the purity of heaven and of those in heaven is intended to be symbolized, and where our thoughts are directed not so much to what we shall be in action towards the earth, as to what we shall personally be, when brought into the rest and purity of heaven, we find the symbol to be a sea of glass like unto crystal. But here, where the divine holiness is mentioned as brought into direct contrast with the iniquity of earth, and where we are symbolized as about to act in the power of that holiness towards the nations, we find not only the emblem of purity, but of consuming holiness too. The sea of glass is "mingled with fire."

The waters of the sea are used in Scripture as the emblem of destructive power from God, blotting out from the land of the living; and also as the emblem of purification unto life. In the Red Sea, the former thought predominates; in the molten sea, or laver of the temple, the latter.

When we, the heavenly part of the Israel of God,

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shall actually be separated by resurrection in glory (according to the life-giving power of Him who is the quickening Spirit, the Lord from heaven), into our heavenly habitations, we shall realize not only all that of which Israel sung when they found themselves separated by the waters of destruction from Egypt, its terrors and its defilements, but also all that the priest was conversant with, when sanctified by the waters of the holy laver, for the ministrations of the sanctuary. Priesthood and kingship are united in the saints.

"*Thou King of the nations*," *&c.*] This is the right reading. It is the very title we should expect to find in the song of Moses, for its subject is the manner in which the Lord had triumphed, and would triumph, over the *nations*. It is important to observe how in this chapter, as indeed throughout the whole of Scripture, there are symbols or expressions employed to designate the Church of the first-born, which prove it to be a constituent part of the Israel of God. In the millennium, the Church of the first-born will be known as having been (what they are now recognized by faith to be) children of Abraham —children of the free-woman, *i.e.* Sarah—partakers of the paschal feast—branches in the Abrahamic olive tree—sons of Aaron, ministering in garments of glory and beauty—children of the Jerusalem which is above. All these types or titles are Israelitish; and it is obvious that some of them, such for

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example as the ministration of the sons of Aaron on the eighth day (see Lev. ix.), imply a certain relation to Israel yet dwelling in the earth.

Yet although Israel will then be dwelling in the earth, they will not be *of* the earth, any more than the Church of the first-born. The moment when the Church of the first-born receives, at the coming of the Lord, its *actual* deliverance from all that is of the old creation, will be also the period when the redeemed of Israel will receive their *virtual* deliverance from all that is of the old creation: for Israel in the earth will as certainly and really be brought into the power of the new creation through and in Christ risen, as their brethren who have gone before them into glory. The difference between Moses and Elijah, and Peter and John, when they stood together upon the holy mount, was apparently very great; but it was temporary only. They were heirs together of the same glory. So also in the millennium. The heavenly Jerusalem, and they who dwell therein, will, as to actually-attained condition, as far excel the earthly city and those who dwell therein, as heaven excels earth. Yet they will have one centre, even Christ (for all things have been headed up in Him), and also one Spirit. They will stand in diverse courts of the same glorious temple. Each would be imperfect without the other; and when the dispensation of the fulness of times has come, and the millennial arrangements ceased, Israel and all others of the redeemed people of God

will join their brethren in the new heavens and new earth, all alike bearing the image of the heavenly man, the Lord from heaven.

We find therefore (as might be expected) a strong correspondency between the language of the heavenly and earthly part of Israel in the songs they sing touching the earth (in whose government they are together engaged) and touching their knowledge of the ways of God therein. When they who stand upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God, sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, Israel too on the earth is able in words not very dissimilar, to make mention both of the works and ways of the Almighty King of nations: "O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm. Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand." This is just what the saints have said above—"Great and marvellous are thy works." But the psalm proceeds, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound, they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; in thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." (Ps. lxxxix. 8, etc.) Here is the apprehension of

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the *ways* of the Almighty. They will be able to understand His ways then, for they will have been brought unto the sprinkled blood of Jesus, and will have the Holy Spirit and the mind of Christ.

In all *essential* blessings, the calling of Israel *then* so nearly resembles that of the Church of the first-born *now*, that they may be truly said to be its successors. We are the first-fruits—they the lump; and "if the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy." If the root on which we are now growing, gives holiness to us, they will be graffed in again on the same root, and made partakers of the like fatness.

Accordingly we find the resemblance between ourselves and them carefully traced in the Scripture. We are children—so are they—"In the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called children of the living God." (Hosea i.) We call Him Father—so will they; "Thou shalt call me, my Father: and shalt not turn away thy face from me." (Jer. iii. 19.) We are IN Christ—so are they; for in 1 Cor. xv. 22, all who ever come into resurrection unto life, are said to be IN Christ. "As in Adam all die, even so IN Christ shall all be made alive." They are baptized by the same Spirit; for we forestall them in receiving that promise in Joel, which is really made to them. The same olive tree communicates sap and richness to both. We are married to the Lord—so will they: "I am married unto you, saith the Lord." "Thy Maker is thy husband." We look for the new

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heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness—so will they.

The use of the symbol of the man-child is, as I have elsewhere observed, another remarkable instance of resemblance. It is clearly an Israelitish symbol, for he is born from Zion. (Isa. lxvi. 7, 8). It is used to symbolize the people of God in a certain position of strength and power, and is used twice—once to represent the place which the risen part of the Israel of God will occupy in heaven (Rev. xii.), and once to represent the place which Israel on the earth will occupy in Jerusalem. Nothing can more strongly mark the correspondency of the two positions. I do not say there will be no difference;—there will be great differences, but they will be circumstantial and official, not essential.

The language, types, and symbols of Scripture are so constantly founded upon this similarity, that it becomes impossible to understand the Scripture, if it be neglected. This dispensation is secretly preparing Israel's heavenly and glorified priesthood—part of which (and this is the great mystery) is gathered from the Gentiles.

"*They sing the song of Moses . . . and the song of the Lamb.*"] "The law was given by Moses, but GRACE and truth came by Jesus Christ." In the song of Moses, we read of the nations hearing and being afraid; of sorrow and trembling taking hold of them; of the leaders of Edom being amazed; of the

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inhabitants of Canaan melting away; of fear and dread falling upon them; of their being still as a stone; we read of all this, but nothing is said of all nations being brought nigh "*to worship*" before the God of Israel. That, it is reserved for those who sing the song of the Lamb to mention. The nations will draw nigh in that day, not to be mute with terror, but to rejoice and to give thanks. See for example the 117th Psalm. "O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him all ye peoples: for his merciful kindness is great towards us, and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord."

"*Thou only art* 'ΟΣΙΟΣ."]—Such is the right reading—ὅσιος not ἅγιος. It is not easy to find a suitable word by which to translate ὅσιος when applied to the Lord. It is answered by חָסִיד (hasîd) in Hebrew: קָדוֹשׁ (Qadôsh) answering to ἅγιος, holy. When חָסִיד (ὅσιος) is used of the Lord (as it frequently is in the Old Testament), it implies mercifulness, loving-kindness, sanctity. (See Jer. iii. 12.) "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am *merciful* (חָסִיד) saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever." Also Isaiah lv. 3, quoted Acts xiii. 34, "I will give you the sure *mercies* (חַסְדֵי—ὅσια) of David. As used in the passage before us, we may understand this word to imply the ascription to the Lord of those attributes and characteristics of which the "sure mercies of David" will be the manifested

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result to Israel and to the earth. Israel will then at last recognise that all those qualities and characteristics which are necessary to human happiness and blessing are to be found in Jehovah alone. As learning this the nations will come and worship before Him, when His righteousnesses (*δικαιώματα*) shall have been made manifest. Hence the Psalm, "Jehovah is righteous in all his ways, and חסד in all his works; Jehovah is nigh to all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." (Ps. cxlv. 17.)

"*Clothed in pure bright linen.*"] That is, linen of resplendent purity. Whenever the possession of *purity* is intended to be that to which attention is peculiarly to be directed, "linen" (in Greek *λίνον*, in Hebrew בַּד) is the type employed. But when the possession of a beauty and excellency of character recognised and declared, is intended to be the prominent thought, then we find not *λίνον* but *βύσσινον*. The last word, which is commonly in our version rendered "fine linen," answers to the Hebrew בּוּץ, and, according to the Septuagint, to שֵׁשׁ. When the armies of heaven in the nineteenth chapter are seen following Christ in the hour of His glory, they are clothed, not in *λίνον* but *βύσσινον*. The former when spoken of as the clothing of the ministers of Divine power, marks their agency as peculiarly pertaining to the present dispensation; whereas the *βύσσινον* is commonly connected with that which is to come.

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The manner in which *βύσσινον*, בּוּץ, is connected with scenes of triumph and glory in the Old Testament, may be seen from the following passages. When David brought home the ark of God in triumph, he was clothed with "a robe of *fine linen;* and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song, with the singers." (1 Chr. xv. 27.) Also, at the dedication of the Temple, (2 Chr. v. 12.) "the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, being arrayed in white linen* (*fine linen* בּוּץ), having cymbals and psalteries and harps," &c. It was *βύσσινον* also (if we follow the Septuagint, which gives it as the translation of שֵׁשׁ,) which was used in the high priest's garments of glory and beauty; *λίνον*, on the contrary, was used in the garments of the Day of Atonement. When *λίνον* was used with *βύσσινον* it partook of the character of the latter.

"*And I heard the angel of the waters*," *&c.*] This either means the angel who was appointed to pour out his vial on the waters, or else some particular angel to whom the superintendence of this part of creation is specially committed. Holy angels are more frequently employed than we think, not only in

* בּוּץ is used eight times in the Old Testament and is always by our translators rendered "*fine linen*," except in this passage where it *should be* so rendered, no word signifying "white" being appended in the Hebrew. Not that it was not white, but that was not the especial point to be made prominent.

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watching over and ministering to the heirs of salvation individually, but also in the providential control of kingdoms, and in superintending the course of nature, both in the heavens and on the earth. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth for ministration, because of those who shall inherit salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.) *All* their ministration, therefore, is for the elect's sake. "All things are yours."

"*I heard the altar say.*"] Such is the right reading. The cry from the altar proceeded, no doubt, from those mentioned as being under it in the sixth chapter. It shows that the saints are still in their disembodied state, and that the hour of resurrection has not yet come.

"*That the way of the kings* FROM *the East might be prepared.*"] Such is the right translation. Some have supposed that the title "kings from the East," refers to Israel and their triumphant return; but Israel are nowhere called "kings from the East"; nor is the hour here spoken of, an hour of blessing to them, but rather of judgment and sore rebuke from the hand of the Lord their God. Moreover, when they are re-gathered by the Lord, it will be not from the East merely, but from every land.

The gathering of *Eastern* nations against Babylon (and it is to the drying up of the Euphrates, the river which represents the strength of Babylon, that

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the passage before us refers), the gathering of nations from the East against Babylon is thus described in Jeremiah: "Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Aschenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars." (Jer. li. 27.)

It is plain both from Isaiah and Jeremiah, that the nations gathered by the secret providence of God against Babylon are allowed to capture it; but before they have settled themselves into the enjoyment of their conquest, the day of the Lord supervenes, and destruction falls upon the conquerors and the conquered alike. In the thirteenth of Isaiah, these two distinct but consecutive acts of visitation are clearly distinguished. "The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle." Here is the providential gathering of the nations, as the first instruments of the Lord's vengeance; but this is followed by a visitation far more terrible—a visitation of distinctly supernatural power. "The stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish *the world* for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity, and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease,

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and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger." This two-fold visitation, Isa. xiii. 4 and 10, exactly accords with the testimony of the Revelation.

"*Armageddon.*"] The gathering of the Eastern or barbarous Asiatic nations against Babylon (which probably is the tidings out of the East and North which troubles the great sovereign of the Roman world, when warring in Egypt, see Dan. xi. 44), is nearly cotemporaneous with the gathering of the nations of the Roman world to Armageddon. Indeed, I regard the gathering at Armageddon as the result of the threatened confederacy against Babylon.

There is no "battle of Armageddon," as is sometimes erroneously said; neither is there any destruction there. It is the place of gathering, not of conflict. The wine-press is trodden without the city, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there the day of the Lord comes upon them, as they are surrounding Jerusalem. (See Joel ii. and iii.)

"*The kings of the whole οἰκουμένη.*"] That is, of the whole Roman world. The words, "of the earth and," should be omitted from verse 14.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

On Revelation XVII. and XVIII.

It has been already remarked, that it is the habit of prophecy first of all to develop the end. It describes the consummation *first;* and if in subsequent visions the same subject be retraced, we find ourselves led further back as to time, and earlier circumstances are pourtrayed. He who has valued and given heed to the earlier lesson, will desire further knowledge—and he is worthy to receive it. We find a remarkable instance of this enlarged instruction in the chapter before us. The thirteenth chapter had, as we have seen, revealed the great Monarch of the prophetic earth in all the plenitude of his glorious power. We see him there in his last estate, with all glory centred in himself—all recognised as proceeding from him, and all returning to him: for he glorifies himself as God.

But this chapter treats of a preceding period. It ends where the thirteenth begins. We find here the initiatory steps of his glory. And although that glory is even here exceeding great, for "the beast

had seven heads and ten horns"—the emblems of concentrated authority over the whole Roman earth, yet he holds this glory from and with another, fairer and more attractive than himself; for he sustained a "woman arrayed in purple and scarlet and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls."

The path, therefore, of Antichrist into power will not be dissimilar to that which has hitherto uniformly been trodden by those who have exalted themselves into greatness. They who have hitherto risen from obscurity into glory—who have founded new sovereignties, and given their name to empires, have first been the servants of some existing system which they have served, and under whose favours they have grown, until they have become strong enough to despise and spurn its patronage. And hence it is that none, no, not even saints (except indeed they watch and keep the testimonies of the prophecy of this Book) will feel surprised or scandalized at the course upon which Antichrist enters. He will merely be the friend and supporter of a system already known and already honoured—a system that will have been long existent and long valued. And they who have seen no deformity therein—whose eyes and whose thoughts have been habituated to rest in it with complacency, if not with joy—who have seen in it no "mystery" of iniquity—will find little to offend them in the ways of that mighty One who will arise to be its champion and its shield. Indeed it cannot be doubted, that

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many an individual, admired and idolized by men, is even at this present hour occupying a place that resembles, in the estimate of God, this *early* place of Antichrist. Few resemble him in his *final* place of individualized power: but all who have thrown their energies into the support of any systems whereby the truth of God has been discredited, or wickedness sanctified by the name of Christ, do virtually stand in a place that answers, in measure, to the symbol here given, and have, like the beast, names, though not *all* names, of blasphemy written on them.

We cannot, therefore, be surprised that this chapter has frequently been applied by the servants of God, in different ages, to those ruling systems which they have severally recognised in their own day as hostile to the people and to the truth of Christ, whilst perhaps blasphemously assuming His authority and name. Nor were they altogether wrong in this; for what ecclesiastical body, I might add, what secular body, has yet arisen in the earth, that has set itself to order the ways of men either in their relations toward Christ or in their natural relations toward God, that has not run counter to His will, dishonoured His Scripture, opposed His saints, and arrogated to itself a place which God never gave it? And how can any be the sustainers of such things, without names of blasphemy being written on them, the more in proportion to the energy and devotedness of their labour? Many a defender of Romanism and such like systems, must

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be regarded as marked with names of blasphemy—for falsehood cannot be thrust into the place of Truth, without Truth being rejected and reviled; and false assumption, and the consequent reviling of God's Truth and people, is blasphemy in His sight. "I know *the blasphemy* of those who say they are Jews, and are not; but are the synagogue of Satan."

But the exactness of prophetic statement must not be destroyed by applications, which, however valuable *as applications*, must never be substituted for direct and exact interpretation. Our first duty always is to inquire what the event which God is pleased to reveal, definitely and specifically is. It may be with godly and upright intention that many have sought to turn the edge of the testimony of the seventeenth of Revelation sometimes on Rome, sometimes on national assumptions of Christianity; but the cause of Truth will not ultimately be served hereby, if in doing this they have unconsciously narrowed the testimony of God, and refused to see in this chapter the definite picture of that closing system to which Romanism and every thing else that successfully sways the unregenerate heart will finally lead—a system the more important to be watched, because it is future, and may be (I fear not to say, *is*) at present rising; and because, by the terms of this prophecy, it will extend its influence over regions which the ecclesiastical systems of Rome, or Greece, or England, have never swayed; and because its adaptation to such a mass of

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nations, for they are described as "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues," shows that it *must be* constructed on principles wide as the heart of man; and therefore that all, whatever their creed, or whatever their nation, are in danger of its seductions, whose path is not simply ordered by the Spirit of God.

It cannot be doubted by any who seriously examine this chapter, that its fulfilment is altogether future. The beast by whom the woman is sustained has ten horns, which indicate a sphere not less extensive than the whole Roman earth: and when, since the power of secular Rome crumbled, have we seen any system that has thus borne sway over the West and East together? or when have we seen any individual like him that is described, sustaining such a system? Moreover, the seven mountains occupied by the woman is the symbol that all and every form of concentrated governmental influence—in a word, *all* authority belongs to her; and, as we might expect, her sustainer and instrument is invested with the same—in him, symbolized by seven heads —in her, by seven mountains on which she sitteth. This complete possession of all authority has never yet been found in any system that has heretofore acted in the earth. Many have coveted it, but none have attained it: power has conflicted with power, system with system, and the jar of opposing interests has hindered the progress of any into undisputed supremacy. And when we consider

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what it means to have the control of all the influence of the renovated Roman earth, its political, military, civil, religious, commercial, educational, systems—to have the control of these things in and throughout the many and now differing nations within its scope; to have the jarring elements of the human mind touching these things brought under effectual control — a control wonderful, if exercised only in one nation, but how much more wonderful in all; when we consider this, we cannot but confess that such a spectacle has never yet been presented in the history of human things. It is the marvellous exhibition of a power yet to be; the more marvellous, because it will be the power not of an individual, but of a system, which, though long prepared in secret (see Zechariah v. 5), will suddenly burst in development upon the eyes of men. "When I saw the woman," says the apostle, "I wondered with a great wonder."

The very fact that the long-lost unity of the Roman world should in any sense be restored, is in itself wonderful. When we consider how entirely it has been broken, first by the inroads of the barbarous Northern nations—then by the successive triumphs of the Saracens and the Turks, and how the last bonds of union which still kept the Western states of Europe in some degree together under the emperor and the pope, were finally broken by the French Revolutionary war, it is wonderful that fragments so shattered—nations so dissimilar as those of

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Asia Minor, and Palestine, and Greece, and Barbary, and England, should again be united so as to be symbolized by the ten horns of the same beast, or the ten toes of one image.

Yet so is it determined by the word of God; and if we watch the signs of the times we may see the symptoms of returning union. We see nothing like the restoration of one undivided empire, neither the appearance of any one universal monarch; for the time of the last monarch of the Gentiles is not yet come. We see, on the contrary, kingdoms broken into distinctness—we see Greece and Egypt separated from Turkey and from one another; and other divisions of this kind there must be, for the last unity of the Roman earth is a unity of distinctness; yet whilst these things are silently progressing, we may equally observe the rapid rise of a peculiar system which is beginning to give to these kingdoms a likeness one to another, and to unite them, not by arms or by religious uniformity, but by the influence of a moral and political system as extensive and as certain as the covetousness and pride of the heart of man.

Limited or, as it is called, constitutional monarchy; commercial enterprise; the consequent subjection of everything—art, science, taste—to utility (the standard of utility being productiveness of wealth); the control of ecclesiastical by civil power, and, what is still more remarkable, the increasing control of governments by capitalists, manufac-

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turers, and merchants; the gradual yielding of the aristocracy of birth and station to the aristocracy of wealth—these and other connected principles have marked a character so distinctive upon the present period, as to be recognised even by those who have never thought of reading these things in the light of the testimony of God. And if facts prove to us that these are the principles that are beginning to spread a moral unity throughout the Roman earth, we could scarcely avoid concluding upon this ground alone, that this is the system represented in this chapter as dominant over the prophetic earth at the time of the end. But when we also find that these are the very features which the Scripture notes as characterizing the Babylon of the latter day, it remains no longer an undetermined question; and what features can be more clearly marked as attaching to the Babylonish period than commercial greatness, the supremacy of wealth, and the mixing of iron and miry clay in the government of the kingdoms?

The supremacy of commercial wealth is an unusual feature in the history of men. I do not mean that there have never been cities like Tyre, or Corinth, or Carthage, or Venice, that have flourished commercially; but their influence has been little felt beyond their own immediate sphere, nor have they by their institutions ever imparted a character to the general system of the nations. Commerce was not supreme either in the early

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native monarchy of Nimrod, nor in the Chaldæan, Persian, Grecian, or Roman empires. None of these empires were distinctively commercial. They all would have emblazoned the sword rather than the ephah on their banners. The ruling power in each depended for its support, sometimes on the nobles or the aristocracy of birth; sometimes on the aristocracy of merit—such as successful generals; sometimes on the people; but never on an aristocracy of merchants. But when, in the history of the declension of monarchic power, the sovereign began first to lean upon his nobles, then upon his generals, then upon the people; and when at last, in modern Europe, the ecclesiastical system, which for a long time had checked the progress of democracy, was itself enfeebled, and the cry of democracy was on every lip, we have seen suddenly arise another barrier more potent and more firm than any that has yet existed in the history of man—the aristocracy of wealth. It is in England that this has chiefly been exhibited. It is no longer the nobles, nor the Church, nor the people; but the Exchanges of our great commercial cities that secretly guide the wheels of government here. "Capital" is power; and men of wealth are becoming the chief guardians of society and the firmest pillars of the throne.

The place occupied by England has been for ages one of singular responsibility. When the last remnants of Eastern civilization were finally swept away

by the fierce inroad of the Turks, and when the Western provinces of the Roman world groaned under the heavy yokes of despotism and superstition, it pleased God to allow this country, placed as it is on the remotest limit of the Roman world, to become the repository of those mighty but godless principles that are to re-animate the Roman kingdoms, and strengthen them for their last hour of proud defiance of God. The great events of modern days have been the invention of printing; the Reformation; the maritime discoveries of Vasco di Gama in the East, and of Columbus in the West; and scientific and mechanical inventions. A new era in the history of mankind has been marked by these things, and where have their effects been felt as in England? They have concentrated their power on England, I might almost say on England alone. As to the results, I must ask the consciences of those who know Christ and who fear God, to judge. Influence enough has gone forth from England, and the whole world is feeling its effects; but what evil under the sun does it not foster for the sake of gain? Hindooism, which is natural idolatry; Mahommedanism, which is apostasy; and Popery, which, professedly in the name of Christ, leads back the Gentile world into the same idolatry and corruption whence the gospel was sent to take them, and which by idolatry violates not merely the revealed, but even the natural relations of man to God—all these and such like things are protected, and honoured,

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and paid by England for the sake of commercial rule. She has found in her Indian and in her colonial possessions, a school in which she has well learned to adapt herself to the varying condition of the human family, whatever their blasphemies, and whatever their sins, and has thus become the mainspring of the new system that is arising in the earth.

It has been said, however, by one well qualified to pronounce a judgment on such subjects,* that France is the great artery of the social system; and that nothing, wheresoever it may be originated, no principle of government, no invention of science, ever becomes European without first passing through France. Accordingly, we are now seeing these principles of which we have been speaking infused into the system of France: and by France and England they are being disseminated: but specially in those countries (Greece, Turkey, and Algeria, are examples) which fall within the limits of the Roman earth. They are obviously principles well calculated to cement into closest union. Similarity of political institutions, especially when those institutions stand in contrast with, and in danger from, the institutions of a near and powerful rival, such as Russia, are in themselves no slender bond.†

* M. Guizot.

† These remarks were written [in 1842], upwards of ten years ago. It may be thought that the recent changes in France have in some degree falsified the expectation here expressed. But the change in

Of old, democrats were wont to assist democrats, and despots to aid despots; but when in addition to this men have found a new and more efficacious centre of union in their commercial interests, and when they feel themselves mutually dependent upon each other for the preservation as well as the increase of their riches—when the ruin of one involves the danger of all—men in such circumstances become wonderfully careful of each other's interests. This is the kind of dependence into which nations are being brought one on the other. Not only are the inhabitants of the commercial nations interested in the maintenance of order and tranquillity in their own countries (for commerce diffuses wealth, and gives to millions an interest in the prosperity of the common weal, which they never had before); but when the wealth of one nation becomes embarked in the undertakings of another, or when one nation lives by selling to another, they become dependent

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France is more apparent than real. After the violent democratic outbreak in 1848 which threatened to annihilate the "iron" of government, and to leave only "clay," it was likely that there would be some violent reaction in order to preserve the "iron." The results of that reaction we have yet to see. The *principle* of representative government is still found in France, and its necessary interests preserve it in political connexion with England. But what is of far more importance, there is silently growing up in France a strong "commercial interest," and this body is soon likely to be to the throne in France what it is to the throne here—its main support. The interests of England and France will then be conclusively one. We know from the Scripture that the clay-iron principles of government *must* finally prevail in *all* the ten kingdoms of the Roman earth. (See "Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms.")

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on each other, and soon becoming aware of their mutual dependency, they understand that common interests involve common prosperity or common ruin.

That peace may be promoted hereby—that the quiet pursuits of industry may be substituted for the bloody triumphs of destroying armies—and the crowded manufactory with all its secret history of sin and misery, may be in the social system what the baronial castle or the camp once was, no one can doubt. The sword is not mentioned in all the detail of the greatness of Babylon; but "merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and bodies and souls of men." Such are the fruits that the soul of Babylon loveth, and they flourish beneath a sky that is to the eye fair and serene. The rude jarring of former ages has passed away. It seems as though men had at last learned that it is best for their own interests to cease from biting and devouring one another. The disturbance and dissension that was once caused by God's own Truth is gone. Men respect the opinions of their neighbours, and charity hopeth well of all. Every one shall be fostered, and

loved, and valued, who subserves the interests of the common weal, and does not interfere with the ways or doctrines of others. Such are the rules of Babylon, such the principles on which human society is beginning to be organized throughout the Roman earth. Such rules indeed will not bring the sword into the household, yet Christ in His faithfulness may (for Truth is a sword and He will not permit it to be banished from the earth), and then there will be the opportunity for Babylon "to drink of the blood of saints, and of the blood of the martyrs of Jesus;" but, with this exception, the moral atmosphere will be untroubled and serene, and little indicate the coming storm.

For man to be proud of anything is a sin, or to lean upon any thing, or worship any thing, save God; but how peculiarly hateful must that sin become when the idol is that which God has so expressly named "filthy lucre." Yet money is everything in the system of which we speak: its foundation and its pillar—the mainspring of all its energies. For men to spread over the earth and subdue it—to produce wealth by supplying food and necessary clothing by the sweat of their brow—to exchange one with another on principles *fairly* remunerative of the time and labour spent in the production, all this is according to the natural arrangements of God. But this is not the commerce of Babylon. It deals in luxuries rather than in necessaries; in other words, it ministers to the lusts, rather than to the need of

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man—"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life," and vanity of spirit. But not only so; heedless of everything, excepting gain, its avowed principle is "to buy at the cheapest, and to sell at the dearest." The misfortune of another may constrain him to sell his all—that misfortune is welcomed, if it cheapens the object of my search. Poor distant barbarous nations may be ignorant of the real value of what I bring, and I scruple not to take a price a hundred times greater than the value of that which I sell. But did God prescribe these principles to regulate the mutual supply of the need of those who found themselves together the inhabitants of a ruined earth—themselves born to sorrow, as the sparks fly upward? Were these the principles on which Abraham dealt with Lot, or with the sons of Heth? or are they the principles of him who loves in this and every other way to add to the miseries and sins of men, and deepen the groan of creation?

We cannot, therefore, wonder at the result. Unscrupulous avidity, endowed with every superiority that skill, and art, and science, and courage, and commanding influence can give, going forth to ransack the whole earth for treasure, is sure to prosper, now that God hath "withdrawn himself into his place," and is "still, and refrains himself." But what is wealth—what is prosperity without Him and His blessing? It ministers joy. But what joy? I saw "a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her

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forehead was a name written, Mystery—Babylon the great, the mother of the harlots and abominations of the earth." Such is the symbol. Who would desire such joy? Yet men do desire it, and will desire, and will drink of it till they are drunken; for conscience has become dead. The Reformation itself (sent as it was in mercy) has been one innocent cause of this. Before that, men were sinning, comparatively in the dark; but since, they have been sinning in the light. Worldly and designing men have availed themselves of the truths of the Reformation; they have struck off thereby the fetter of superstition from many a hand; but their wish has been to set it free for worldliness, not for God; and they have succeeded.

But this system, it must be remembered, is in the fullest sense to be a *ruling* system; that is, it will not be merely a morally influential system which kings and governors may be glad to use; but it will be a system that will *use them*, and make them subservient to its will. The beast having ten horns *carries* the woman. This willing subjection of the executive organs of government is a peculiarly distinguishing feature in the Babylonish period. The Papal system struggled for ages to reduce the crowns of Western Europe into this kind of subserviency to itself; but the attempt signally failed, even in the limited sphere in which it was made. But here we find the ten horns of the Roman earth in willing and complete subjection. And this sub-

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jection has begun, at least in the country in which we dwell; for what minister would in England hold the reins of government for an hour who should refuse to be the servant of that half-popular half-monarchic commercial system with all its latitudinarianism and infidelity, which is already paramount here, as it soon will be throughout the prophetic earth?

And this very fact of governors acting, not as individuals, not on the unbiassed judgments of their own minds, but as the organs of a system, invests their actions with the greater importance as signs of the moral character of the times; because the actions of the representative of a system indicate, not the condition of a mere individual mind, but the habitual moral condition of millions before God. I say habitual—because caprice may determine an individual, but it cannot influence the actings of a deliberately planned and settled system. And although that system is as yet but partially formed, and is only partially influential, yet the character of policy and legislation at home and abroad is strongly enough marked with new peculiarities; and those peculiarities we shall, I doubt not, find to be retained when it is developed in its perfectness. If, for example, we could now transport ourselves to the council-chambers at Constantinople (I name that place, because there the affairs of the Eastern and Western branches of the Roman world are necessarily in question), and if we were permitted to hear

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the plans of England and France developed, we should soon be able to form an estimate of the political and religious character of Babylonish government. Mahomedanism, Armenianism and all the other corrupted forms of Eastern Christianity, Judaism, and the heathenism of the Druses, all fall within the East; whilst Judaism, Mahomedanism, the Greek, Roman, and Anglican churches, together with various forms of Protestantism and Infidelity, divide the West; and all have to be considered. The plan adopted must be such as to suit them all—none are to be pre-eminent—no, not even if the fulness of God's own Truth should be in them; but all are to be not merely protected but fostered in their own proper sphere, and no question of "What is truth?" must be allowed for a moment to interrupt the harmony of this Satanic concord.

I have said that this system is not as yet developed, so that we must not expect at present to be able fully and accurately to trace its details. Its manifestation before the eyes of men (when it will assume a form as definite and palpable as Popery, Mahomedanism, or any other system that has heretofore appeared)—its manifestation will not be until it shall be set up in the land of Shinar on its own base; for this woman represents not a system merely, but a system connected with one especial city, and that place is Babylon, the Euphratean city in the land of Shinar. "The woman which thou sawest, is that great city which reigneth over the

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kings of the earth." Such are the concluding words of the seventeenth chapter; and in that which immediately succeeds, the outward circumstances of that great city are described. The land of Shinar, whence civilization first proceeded, is the place to which it will again return, and in which it will be concentrated. There also it shall find its grave. The pit shall suddenly open its mouth upon it. The silent progress of the mystery of iniquity is advancing secretly now—so secretly, that even they who are expecting something to arise, are expecting anything except the right. The lid of the ephah, however, is lifted for the servant of God, and he is allowed to glance at that which is contained within it. To him it is given to understand the truth, whilst others are lost in conjecture. Some, for example, fear lest the hordes of the North from Russia should again pour down upon the plains of Europe, and again establish a universal monarchy upon the ruins of Western civilization. Others hope for the rise of some great conqueror, who, like Napoleon, may again individualize power, and give the sword pre-eminence over the sceptre. Others expect, some with fear, some with hope, that a dominant religious system will be revived, and Romanism, or modified Romanism, be again supreme. Others desire that the government of the whole Roman world should depend upon religious systems, but that those systems should be all the Churches of Christendom that can pretend to (so-called) apos-

tolic lineage, linked together in a catholic union; "the German sects of the Reformation" (I use their own words) being alone excluded. I merely mention these things to show how utterly unconscious men are of the real nature of the system which is being silently prepared; and whilst some are exclaiming against one form of evil, and others against another, the literature, the philanthropy, the government, and often the real Christianity of the day, is in the meanwhile advancing, and that with most successful efforts, that system which God has named "Babylon the Great, the Mother of the harlots and abominations of the earth."

It is well that we should consider carefully that remarkable passage in Zechariah to which I have alluded, respecting the ephah and its "going forth." When the prophet was taught where the influence would dwell which, in the latter day, should "go forth" with pervading sovereign power over Israel and the nations of the prophetic earth, there was shown to him not a sword, nor a mitre, nor a diadem, but an ephah—the emblem of commerce. "Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their resemblance through all the earth." Such was the vision; and how truly is it beginning to be verified! Is not commerce the sovereign influence of the day? If we

wished to inscribe on the banners of the leading nations of the earth an emblem characteristically expressive of their condition, could we fix on any device more appropriate than an ephah? Will not Israel, when they shall concentrate their unsanctified energies, and gather together their wealth, and re-settle themselves in the land from which they have been driven, glory in assuming some such symbol as this? "This," said the angel, "is their resemblance throughout all the earth."* The commencement of the reign of commerce is already recognised, and men welcome it. We have suffered enough (say they) from the sword of the conqueror, and from the mitre, and from the crown. We wish not that society should fall beneath the sway of either. Let commerce be supreme. Its influences are benign and gentle. It gives scope to the energies of man. It ennobles and enriches. It cherishes science; it

* The word translated "resemblance," עַיִן, means literally *eye*. Thus the Vulgate, "Hæc est *oculus* eorum in universâ terrâ." "Eye" may either mean *aspect*, *appearance*, as in Numbers xi. 7, where it is said of the manna that the *colour* or *appearance* thereof was as the colour of bdellium; or "eye" may mean that to which we look for guidance, favour, or any supply of blessing. If the eye of a father or a friend rest benignly on us, we look to its kindness as a source of supply to all our requirements. Hence *eye* is continually used of fountains in the wilderness, and wells of water. See Genesis xvi. 7; also Deut. xxxiii. 28; "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain (literally *eye*) of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew." Thus we have to contrast the "eye" of unbelieving Israel and the nations, viz. the ephah in the land of Shinar, with the "eye" of forgiven Israel in the land of Emmanuel, when Jehovah shall be their strength and their song.

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encourages art; it stimulates research. It diffuses wealth and banishes penury. It breathes of peace and concord. It is the panacea for our ills. Who, then, will condemn commerce? Who will say that the ephah can be the harbinger of anything but good?

The *material* interests of commerce for the most part absorb the attention of those who are occupied therein, and they care little respecting the moral principles which the god of this world may be silently connecting with the exaltation of their idol. Yet it is very manifest, that the inauguration of this rising age of commercial greatness is accompanied by the introduction of new principles—new governmental principles which, although not yet fully systematised, are silently operating on society and gradually casting it in a new mould. For governments *openly* to ignore Truth, and *avowedly* to cherish all the varieties of falsehood, is, in the history of Christendom at least, something new. Society apart from God, and from His Truth, is but a many-tongued monster that gives utterance to voices that all emanate from the pit. Yet we are taught that it is the duty of government to be the exponent of the mind of society, and to give effect to the expressions of its will; that it should honour falsehood, sustain its emissaries, conciliate all by pleasing all, and oppose none except those who maintain that the Truth of God is unchangeable and eternal—that it is clear, precise, and definite—

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that it cannot bend to the wilfulness and perversity of man, nor confound darkness with light, nor call evil good. But the steadfast inflexibility of Truth ill suits the designs of those who need *pliant* principles —principles that can accommodate themselves to all circumstances, and adapt themselves complacently to all forms of superstition, to all varieties of evil. If the "*solidarité*" of nations is to be sought on such principles as these, and if the "*material*" interests of the human family are to be made the supreme object of pursuit, it is no wonder that God and revealed Truth should be excluded from such consolidation. Such will be the result of the now germinant principles of this rising age of commercial greatness. Few, however, care to analyse them. They are *hidden* in the ephah.

Zechariah was not restricted to the sight of the outward form of the ephah only. He was also commanded to look within, and there he saw a woman seated in the midst of the ephah. "A woman," as we have already seen, is a symbol continually used to designate a *moral* system. Thus then we are taught in this vision just what we learn from present facts, that an attractive moral system is associated with that which, if viewed in its physical aspect merely, would be but as the bare form of an ephah. The prophet looked again, and he saw the angel cast something* into the ephah with the woman, saying, "This is wickedness." And he

* See further in "Zech. v. re-translated, etc." (1896).

cast it into the midst of the ephah, and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. "Wickedness," or, as it is interpreted by St. Paul, "lawlessness" (*ἀνομία*), is a word that specifically designates that peculiar form of evil which makes Antichrist what he will be as the man of lawlessness, (*ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας*), or the wicked one (רשע, Isaiah xi., *ὁ ἄνομος*, 2 Thess. ii.). The principles, therefore, of "lawlessness" in their earliest form of concentration, will be found connected with the ephah. But they remain hidden, and continue to be the "mystery of lawlessness," until the ephah is translated to the land of Shinar, and there established. With its establishment in the land of Shinar (and can any words more plainly mark locality), the vision of Zechariah touching the ephah, closes. Can there be any difficulty in understanding these things? In the land of Shinar the woman hidden in the ephah will be manifested, and known as Babylon the Great, "wondered after" by men, but in the estimate of God, "the Mother of the harlots, and the abominations of the earth."

It is this system, then, that Antichrist will, in the early period of his history, espouse. All plenitude of authority and influence, indicated in the vision by seven mountains, will, at the period of which this chapter treats, be possessed by the woman. But power, if it is to be used, requires of course some form of executive agency, and this is supplied in him. He, for the time being, becomes the executive agent

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of all her power; making this his last step onward into the eighth final form of executive government, or "kingship," which concludes the evil history of authority delegated to man. "There are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of [ἐκ] the seven."

This passage (which is parenthetic*) is evidently intended to direct our thoughts to the various forms of executive government or kingship that have existed, or shall exist, in the prophetic earth until the hour when the sovereignty of the world shall become the sovereignty of the Lord and of His Christ. We might expect to find such a reference in a chapter which professedly treats of him who is to close the history of human government by the introduction of a new and marvellous form of power—a form new as to its mode of administration and development, yet not unconnected with the past, for it will be constructed upon principles drawn from the experience of preceding ages, and will have the foundations of its greatness laid by the primeval efforts of mankind. He will be the eighth; but he is *of* [ἐκ] the seven.

The native energy and intrepidity of him who is said to have been a mighty hunter before the Lord —an energy essential to men who were settling in a forlorn and unsubdued earth, surrounded by beasts of the forest and countless other difficulties and

* See Notes.

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dangers—very naturally gave the first form to kingship, and hence its parentage may be said to spring. "The beginning of his kingdom was Babel." The supremacy of Nimrod was not derived from any previously existing system. He neither inherited his power from others, nor did he, like Nebuchadnezzar afterwards, receive it as a gift from God. He earned it for himself by the force of his own individual character—but it was without God. Great progress was made in the kingdom which he founded in the land of Shinar, in civilization and refinement; for we early read of the goodly Babylonish garment, and of the skill and learning of the Chaldees; but their dominion was repressed and kept, as it were, in abeyance by the hand of God, until the trial of Israel, His people, had been fully made, that it might be seen whether they would prove themselves worthy of supremacy in the earth.

The form of government in Israel was a theocracy; as was seen in the reigns of David and of Solomon, who were types (*imperfect* types indeed) of Him that is to come. The monarch was independent of and uncontrolled by those whom he governed, but he was dependent upon God, who dwelt in the temple, ever near to be consulted, and whose law was given as the final standard of appeal. He stood between God and the people, not to be their functionary and slave—not to be the expression of *their* judgments and the reflection of *their* will; but, as set *over* them by God, his office was to mould *them* and to fashion

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them by principles which he himself had received from above. But the possession of power like this, held in companionship with God, required a holiness that was not found in man in the flesh, and therefore it was soon forfeited. Divine sanction, however, has many times since been coveted, and the name of "the Lord's anointed" assumed. The last great king of the Gentiles, indeed, will do more than this, for he will take the place of Divinity itself, and sit upon the mount of the congregation on the sides of the north, saying that he is like the Most High. But all this is unauthorized assumption. God has never connected His name with Gentile power, save as declaring that He is the source from which it flows; nor has He ever granted the title of "the Lord's anointed" to any Gentile king, in the sense in which it once attached to the occupant of Israel's throne. It is a title reserved for Him who shall soon come to fill that throne, and to bear the glory; and then we shall again behold the theocracy, sustained for ever in holiness and in blessing.

The third form was developed when the Gentile dynasty was formally constituted by God in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. He, like the monarchs of Israel, had absolute sovereignty granted to him—but God was not with him in it. He and his successors received it as delegated power, to be exercised according to their own pleasure, though in final responsibility to God. It is not necessary here to pursue the painful history of the Gentiles. It

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is sufficient to say, as regards the history of power, that the Gentile monarchs from the beginning, not knowing God so as to lean upon Him, and too weak to stand alone; exposed to the jealousy and hatred of those whom they governed—a jealousy not unfrequently earned by their own evil, found it necessary to lean upon something inferior to themselves: and thus the character of power has been deteriorated from age to age, until at last the monarchy of these latter days has consented not only to own the people as the basis and source of its power, but has also submitted to be directed in the exercise of that power by given rules prescribed by its subjects. The authority held by Nebuchadnezzar is represented by fine gold; that of the constitutional monarchies of this present hour by iron mixed with miry clay. There never was a declaration of Scripture more distinctly verified by facts than this.*

The native monarchy of Nimrod, the theocracy of Israel, the despotic authority of Nebuchadnezzar, the aristocratic monarchy of Persia, and the military monarchy of Alexander and his successors, had all passed away when John beheld this vision. All these methods had been tried—none had been found

* The great difference between the iron power of Rome and the clay-iron power of present constitutional monarchies is this. The emperor at Rome, although professedly elected by the people or senate, was, after he once possessed the power, absolute: whereas the monarch now not only owns the people as the source of power, but is directed and fettered in every action he performs. He is, in fact, merely the executive agent of his subjects' will. For further remarks on the deterioration of power, see "Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms."

to answer even the purposes of man; and now another had arisen, the half military, half popular monarchy of the Cæsars—the iron empire of Rome. "Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a little space."

That other (though it cannot yet be said to have *come* so as to fulfil this verse) * has nevertheless appeared, and is found in the constitutional monarchy of this present hour. This is the seventh, and, with one brief exception, the last form that is to be exhibited before the end shall come, and it is under this form that the system of Babylon is matured. It is obvious that a monarchy, guided not by the people numerically, but by certain classes of the people, and those classes determined by the possession of property, must be the form best adapted for the accumulation of wealth, and the growth of commercial power; for it gives (which pure democracy has ever failed to do), the best security for property without unduly fettering the liberty of individual enterprise.

A system, however, like that of Babylon, will ill suit the individual ambition of Antichrist. He will not submit to be legislated for by the classes of the wealthy, nor any other classes. He will spurn even the laws of God, and will do according to his own

* It will not have come in the sense of this verse, until it pervades the Roman world. When *all* the ten kingdoms have been constitutionalised, it may be said to have come.

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will. The ten kings of the ten kingdoms will gladly own him as their lord. The yoke of the Babylonish system is a hard yoke upon them; besides which the democratic pressure, which is perpetually increasing in strength, could scarcely be finally resisted even by the system of Babylon itself. They will gladly, therefore, take refuge under the arm of one whom Satan strengthens for dominion, and join in destroying a system which has really made them its slaves, and, in many things, left them less liberty than the meanest of their subjects. "They shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire: for God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." The *system* of Babylon will be destroyed; but the *city* with all its wealth and greatness will for a time continue, and Antichrist will reign over it for a season, until the hour of *his* doom and *its* doom together comes. He will hate its system, but he will not hate *it;* for its resources, its palaces, its ships, and its merchandise, will be among the chiefest objects of his desire—the sinews of his strength, and the adornment of his glory.*

* In the seventeenth chapter, the symbol is a woman—in the eighteenth, a city. The former represents the city Babylon, as to its own peculiar system of law, government, &c.; the latter represents the same city, as to its physical resources, wealth, merchandise, &c.

If a stranger were to visit this country, he would first be shown,

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We have not, therefore, to watch so much against Antichrist himself, as against that system which precedes Antichrist, which he adopts, and by which he rises into his glory—a system whose principles are already operating, and everywhere spreading their destructive influence, and yet discerned by few, neither judged according to the light so fully given in this chapter. The system of Babylon will not be an ecclesiastical system—on the contrary, it will be distinctively secular; but ecclesiastical systems may be dragged in its train, as every system will be that is not simply ruled by the Spirit of Jesus: neither will any but they who are content "to go without the gate bearing His reproach," be free from its evil influence.

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probably, its arsenals, its storehouses, manufactories, and the like; the symbol of all this would be "a city": and when he inquired respecting the system, moral, educational, political, and so forth, under which all this greatness had been matured, he would be furnished with a sketch of England's peculiar system of law, religion, government, &c. This would be England as "the woman."

Babylon's peculiar system ceases as soon as Antichrist becomes supreme. He, from that time forward, is to the city what the *system* of that city had been. It must be remembered, however, that the woman, which represents Babylon as to its system, and the city, which represents Babylon as to its physical greatness, are both feminine symbols. This is evident from the language of the eighteenth chapter throughout. And although Babylon loses, as soon as Antichrist becomes supreme, its peculiar system, by which everything in the Roman earth had till then been regulated; yet it does not lose, and cannot lose, until it ceases to exist, a peculiar moral character. It must have a moral character of its own. The destruction of its own specific system does not alter *that*, and it continues to be one of unchanged badness. Fornication, deliciousness, &c., as much attach to it under the lordship of Antichrist, as when its own system ruled.

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It has been the practice of some, and especially of those who have been lately labouring to revive the darkness and abominations of Popery in this country, to speak much of Antichrist. If, say they, such an one is to arise (as he surely will) full of all wickedness and blasphemy, and if he will set himself to destroy all institutions, human and divine, that are contrary to him, let us only consider what he will destroy, and then we shall learn what we should cherish. According to this we may—nay, we ought to—nourish the Harlot and all her abominations, because Antichrist will be her destruction.

This is strange counsel; and yet it is virtually accepted by all who justify their position, not because it will answer to the requirements of Truth, but because it is obnoxious to some more palpable form of wickedness that may be at hand. It is an easy thing to speak against Antichrist, and yet to sustain those very things that cause God to send him in judicial infliction upon a transgressing world.

The alarm which has lately been excited as to the revival of Popery, has concentrated the attention of God's children upon one corner of the camp, and diverted their attention from that point where Satan is making his real and triumphant assault. I do not say that the deadly doctrines which are being spread around us ought not to be resisted, even unto death. I do not say that they may not yet more widely spread; but another system is being prepared,

which is not religious, and *it* is the system to be really feared, for it will reign supremely in the nations among whom we dwell.

It is being secretly prepared, and therefore men do not see it: but its establishment will be sudden. "I saw," says the prophet, "and behold there came forth two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork; and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base." The stork is a bird of strong and rapid flight—their wings were spread, and no adverse influences resisted, but all influences were in their favour, even all influences from God; for "the wind was in their wings."* Such will be the rapidity and the success with which these principles, which are now being prepared in these Western regions, will be suddenly established in the East. The nations will be suddenly knit into this harmony of evil—they will have one mistress, and one cup, from which they will all drink, until they are together drunken. Antichrist, in all the attractiveness

* We cannot certainly say what the two women represent. Perhaps they represent the secular and ecclesiastical systems of the Roman world, uniting their energies to establish the ephah. When once the secular and ecclesiastical systems unite in subserving the latitudinarian commercial system of which I speak, the end will not be far distant.

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of his glory, will then arise in their midst; the power of delusion will be on them; they will worship the dragon, and worship him; and then the end will come.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

On Revelation XVIII.

I HAVE already referred to the early mention which is made of the city Babylon in the first book of the Scripture. Its foundation by Nimrod, and its being made, immediately after, the scene of the first proud attempt at human confederation by those who said they would make themselves a name in the earth, is there recorded; and then it is left. More than a thousand years rolled away before it is again referred to in the Scripture, during all which period it was little known. Assyria and Nineveh flourished, but, until the days of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon was comparatively insignificant. It was Nebuchadnezzar who said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"

But this was not its earliest mention. Its earliest mention, after Genesis, is in a prophecy which describes at once its greatness and its doom.*

* The reference to the "*goodly mantle of Shinar*," in the book of Joshua, I do not esteem an exception, nor any casual reference similar to this.

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Nearly two hundred years before Nebuchadnezzar raised it from obscurity, whilst it was as yet the object neither of admiration nor of dread, Isaiah prophesied both of its glory and its fall; and after this Jeremiah, when its glory was at its height, detailed, with still greater minuteness, the circumstances of its final destruction. These prophecies have been read carelessly. *A* destruction has fallen upon Babylon, as on other cities of the East; and we have hastily concluded that this is *the* destruction of which the prophets speak; and have never, until lately, thought of inquiring whether it may not yet again rise from its depression, and again be known as the golden city—the enemy of God's truth, and the subject of His vengeance in the great day of His wrath.

It would be strange if Babylon were to be excepted from the general rule as to the renovation of the East. We know from the Scripture that Jerusalem, which has similarly been brought low under the incipient judgments of God, will be revived by human agency—re-established by her people whilst yet remaining in unbelief, and therefore be "visited by the Lord of hosts, with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm, and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire." We know also that Egypt, which has been desolated by divine judgments, is at this present moment arising from her depression by the aid of Western Europe —still however evil and unreconciled to God, and

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therefore amenable to His wrath. "Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. . . . In that day shall Egypt be like unto women; and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which he shaketh over it. *And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt;** every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts which he hath determined against it." The like may be said of Edom, Tyre, Antioch, and other cities of Syria. They are more and more becoming the objects of European interest, and plans have been proposed for reviving some of them from their desolation. We should, therefore, require some express authority from the Scripture, if Babylon is to be excepted from the general system of Eastern renovation.

The situation, also, of Mesopotamia (for that is the name of the district in which Babylon is), and its wonderful fertility, seem to mark it as the place on which men, if they go on pursuing their present course, must necessarily fix as one chief sphere of their operations. "Owing," says a recent writer, who is describing the Euphratean regions, "owing to the prodigious fertility of their great alluvial

* These words clearly prove the futurity of this prophecy; for when has the land of Judah been a terror to the land of Egypt?

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plains, and the unbounded riches of nature which there spring up, almost unbidden, to the hand of the husbandman, the progress of opulence has always been much more rapid in the Eastern than in the Western world. In the great plain of Mesopotamia, one-half of which is composed of a natural terrace, sloping down with a gradual declivity from the Euphrates to the Tigris; and the other of a similar slope, inclining the other way from the Tigris to the Euphrates, the means of irrigation are provided, as it were, ready-made by nature to the hand of man; and nothing is required on his part but to convey away into little channels the beneficent stream, which thus descending in perennial flow from the Armenian snows, affords the means of spreading continual verdure and fertility over a soil where vegetation ripens under the rays of a tropical sun."* Such, even now, is the fertility of the Mesopotamian district; and when, in addition to this, we remember that this fair and fertile region is situate in the very centre of Eastern and Western civilization (for India is becoming another Europe in the East), and that its river, stretching very nearly from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean,†

* Alison on French Revolution. Colonel Chesney says, "Diwaniyeh, the next station to Hillah, is a date-encircled, walled village, with extensive gardens. It is approached through a continued country of date trees, forming groves of exceeding beauty, and a fringe of verdant columns, whose uniformity seldom palls upon the eye." (Journal of Royal Geographical Society, vol. vii. p. 428.)

† The distance from the navigable point of the Orontes to the

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seems to offer a natural canal for the commerce of the whole Eastern and Western worlds; we should marvel if advantages like these should be overlooked or rejected. It would contradict all that experience has taught us of the sharp-sighted covetousness of the heart of man. And lastly, when Israel with all their wealth and commercial energy shall return to Palestine and there form the great connecting link between the Mediterranean and the East, they will need the Euphrates as much as Germany needs the Danube, or Egypt the Nile, or London the Thames.

But we have not to reason merely on antecedent probabilities. The question is to be determined from Scripture, and the question is, Whether the circumstances which the Scripture connects with the destruction of Babylon have or have not come to pass? The answer must be, that they have not.

For, in the first place, I suppose that nothing is more certain than that the song recorded in the fourteenth of Isaiah as about to be sung by Israel over the fallen king of Babylon, has never yet been sung by them. What king of Babylon has yet appeared, of whom it can be said, that he hath "sat upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north, saying, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High;" and after "making the world as a wilderness, and destroying

navigable point of the Euphrates is not 150 miles; and it has been proposed to connect these points by a railroad or canal; in which case the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean would be united.

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the cities thereof, is himself cast out of his grave, like an abominable branch, like a carcase trodden under foot"? All this has never yet come to pass; and it is expressly said, that the time when the Lord rises up against him and his children, is the time when He will sweep Babylon with the besom of destruction. "I will rise up against THEM (*i. e.* the children of this wicked one), saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts." Unless, therefore, we can prove that this king of Babylon has run his course, we must admit that the destruction of Babylon, as here described, is yet future.

Moreover, Israel is not to sing this song over the king of Babylon until they themselves are not merely delivered, *but rule over their oppressors.* "The Lord will have mercy upon Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the peoples shall take them and bring them to their place; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord, for servants and handmaids; and they shall take them captives whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors. And it shall come to pass, in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow and thy fear, and from the

hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this parable against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased—the golden city ceased!" When, since the days of Nebuchadnezzar, to the present hour, has Israel been thus carried back to their land *by the nations*? When have they taken them captives whose captives they were; or when have they ruled over their oppressors? A remnant of Israel were restored by Cyrus, but they were strictly ruled over *by* him, instead of being rulers *over* him; and the rest of Israel continued dispersed among the nations. It is evident, therefore, that the whole scene of this chapter is future, and that Babylon is yet again to be the golden city, has yet to practise oppressions, and is yet to be made to cease from them.

Indeed the period of the *final* destruction of Babylon is universally identified in the Scripture with that of the final forgiveness and restoration of Israel. Thus the 50th chapter of Jeremiah, after describing the blow that is to fall upon Babylon, adds—"*In those days and in that time*, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." Again, in the 18th verse of the same chapter: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of

Israel, Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria.* And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon Mount Ephraim and Gilead. *In those days and in that time,* saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve." If, therefore, the *final* blow had been inflicted on Babylon *and its land*, Israel would have been forgiven.

Moreover, in the immediately connected passage in the thirteenth chapter (for the thirteenth and fourteenth of Isaiah should be read as one), we find that Babylon receives its final visitation at the coming of "*The day of the Lord.*" No one can seriously read the second chapter of this prophet, and doubt what "The day of the Lord" means. It is the day "when the lofty looks of men shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day . . . and the idols he shall utterly abolish . . . and men shall go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." None of these

* This refers to the period when Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. It was taken by Nebuchadnezzar's father. After this Babylon became the head of Assyria, and, therefore, the last king of Babylon—Antichrist—is called the Assyrian.

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things have yet been. The haughtiness of men is not bowed down—the idols are not abolished—the earth has not been shaken—the Lord is not alone exalted; and, therefore, the day of the Lord, and consequently the visitation of Babylon, has not yet been.

But the thirteenth chapter does not merely mention the day of the Lord as being the period of Babylon's final visitation; it also describes some of the accompanying signs. "The stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth; and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish THE WORLD for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold, even a man than a golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger." Unless, therefore, it can be shown that the stars have thus been darkened—and that the world has thus been punished—and that the heavens and earth have thus been shaken; it follows that the visitation of Babylon here spoken of is yet to come. And if any should doubt whether it be the literal Babylon or no, it is defined in a subsequent verse as being "Babylon the glory of kingdoms, *the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency.*"

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Again, we find it prophesied (Jer. l. 46) that at "the noise of the taking of Babylon, the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations"—and also (li. 8) that "Babylon is *suddenly* fallen and destroyed." There never, perhaps, was an event that affected the world less than the taking of Babylon by Cyrus. All that is said of it in the Scripture is, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldæans slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom." (Dan. v. 31.) It was no destruction upon the city. It was the quiet occupation of the throne of Babylon by one person instead of another. And Babylon for ages prospered under the change. It was anything rather than suddenly destroyed. Ages after, in the days of Alexander the Great, who died at Babylon, we find it one of the chief cities of the East. St. Peter writes his epistle thence; and long after the establishment of Christianity, the patriarch of Babylon was one of the great ecclesiastical rulers of the East. Recently, a bishop of Babylon was consecrated by the Pope; a city named Hillah, containing upwards of 10,000 inhabitants, at present stands on the very site of the ancient city, and the Arabian is still accustomed to pitch his tent in the midst of the scattered ruins.*

* For further observations on its past history and present condition, see "Babylon: its Future History and Doom," etc., as advertised at the end of this volume. I have there given a sketch of the plain of Babylon, which shows not only that Hillah, but that many flourishing villages also, stand on the site of Babylon.

How then is it possible that the prophecy of the thirteenth of Isaiah should be fulfilled?

Seeing, therefore, that the world has not been visited by the predicted judgment—that Israel has not been restored, so as to reign over their enemies—that the pride of man has not been finally humbled—that no *sudden* destruction has fallen upon Babylon—that the nations have never trembled at its fall—that its name is still held as a name of honour—that men have not ceased to dwell there—that the Arabian has not ceased to pitch his tent there, we conclude that, like all other similar

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This plan I submitted to the approval of Colonel Chesney, previous to its publication. Colonel Chesney states that an Arabian tribe were encamped in the very midst of the ruins of Babylon, during the whole time of his being there.

It is stated by Mr. Rich. who also personally examined the plain of Babylon with great care, that the ruins of the eastern quarter of Babylon commence about two miles above (*i.e.* north of) Hillah (p. 58), and that the most stupendous ruins of all (Birs Nimroud) are about six miles to the south-west, *i.e.* below Hillah (p. 73). This, of course, places Hillah in the midst. Speaking of Hillah itself, he says (p. 157), "In the foregoing remarks I have taken for granted what indeed appears to be now the general belief, that the ruins AT Hillah are those of Babylon. I have myself no doubt of the fact." ["*Journey to the site of Babylon in* 1811," by Claudius J. Rich, 1839.]

Mr. Rich further says. "The gardens of Hillah on both sides the river are very extensive; so that the town itself, from a little distance, appears embosomed in a wood of date trees," (p. 50.) "The air is salubrious, and the soil extremely fertile, producing great quantities of rice, dates, and grain of different kinds, though it is not cultivated to above half the degree of which it is susceptible. The grand cause of this fertility is the Euphrates, the banks of which are lower, and the stream more equal than the Tigris." (Page 53.) He then goes on to describe how the toils of agriculture are almost superseded by the annual overflowing of the Euphrates.

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prophecies, whether respecting Egypt, Tyre, Edom, or Jerusalem, the desolation that has taken place is only a warning and forerunner of that which is yet to be, and that the real fulfilment of the prophecy will be when the day of the Lord shall come.

And when we turn from the Old Testament to the New, we find the evidence yet more strengthened; for it cannot be denied that the Revelation describes the fall of a city, and that the time of its fall is at the end of this dispensation. "And the seventh angel poured forth his vial into the air, and there came a great voice out of the temple in heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." (Rev. xvi.) This is in close accordance with the testimony of Isaiah and Jeremiah. The mention of the Euphrates in the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation, as well as the name Babylon, sufficiently marks the locality of the city that is thus to be destroyed. And when we add to this the predicted establishment of the ephah in the land of Shinar—a prophecy given long after the taking of Babylon by Cyrus—it appears strange

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scepticism to doubt that the Babylon of the Revelation is the same as that of the Old Testament prophets.

Moreover, Babylon was not characterised by commerce and *traffic by sea*, as the Babylon of the latter day will be. The description of the eighteenth of Revelation would ill suit the city of Nebuchadnezzar; for neither he nor his nobles were merchants. But what city would flourish now that was not a city of merchants? Accordingly we find it written of the future Babylon, "Thy merchants were the great men of the earth."—"The merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more."—"The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing."—"And every shipmaster, and every passenger (ὁ ἐπὶ τόπον πλέων), and sailors, and all who trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas! alas! that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness; for in one hour is she made desolate." Costliness will be the great characteristic of Babylon. It is not so much the refinements of taste and learning, it is not painting, nor poetry, nor architecture, nor sculpture, neither the sound of the trumpet, nor the voice of the warrior, that we find within her

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walls.* It is the place of utility, rather than of taste—of luxurious enjoyment, not of hardship and war. Other nations and other ages have indulged their tastes, and been content, like Athens, with refinement and poverty; or have lived, like Rome, in the camp, and been satisfied to buy glory by the sacrifice of rest. But this city will grow up under a system which teaches to value the utilities of wealth. Things dainty, and things goodly, which cause to live deliciously, are the fruits after which Babylon lusteth. She is "tender and delicate"—"the lady of kingdoms." (Is. xlvii. 1, 5.)

The list of Babylon's merchandise contains little that is in itself evil—with two exceptions, nothing. The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots,—these and such like things are not in themselves evil. They are most of them a part of the creation of God, which Jesus will in due time gather around Himself, to the glory of God and

* I do not mean that she will have none of these things—for she will, and that in abundance; but the omission of them from the list of her greatness, shows that they are not the *characteristics* of her condition.

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the joy and blessing of His saints. We read of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, and ivory palaces, as constituting, in the age to come, part of the glory of the great King; and the gates of that city, on the bells of whose horses holiness will be written, will by and by be crowded with the merchandise of the whole earth. "The multitudes of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah, all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee; the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious." But it is otherwise now, even as it was when the Lord Jesus was here; for now the world is without God, and these things are in the hand of him who worketh in all the children of disobedience. He who habitually felt, when in this world, that He was walking as if through the valley of the shadow of death, could have little desired to clothe Himself with its ornaments: and even if it had been otherwise, if He had felt this earth less fearful and less strange, His very pity and tenderness would have made Him poor; for how could He be rich who spent His days in ministering to others, and said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." But it is the habit of Babylon to receive and not to give. The riches of the world flow into her treasuries, and she

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accumulates, not sparing the bodies of men, and trafficking even in their souls.*

And now, if the storehouses of this country and of India could be suddenly transferred to the fertile banks of the Euphrates,—if ships and passengers in ships from every country were congregated at Babylon as the mart of nations,—if the merchants who crowd the exchanges of our great cities, where Jews, Mahomedans, Socinians, and nominal Christians forget their differences in the eager pursuit of a common interest,—if such as they were established in the East, as the centre of the religious, intellectual, and moral habits, that should characterise the last great merchant city, would not the picture of this chapter be accomplished? It would be, doubtless, in one sense, a quiet scene. There would be, for a little while, the appearance of fraternity, union, and peace, instead of war and bloodshed; there would be the quiet tolerance of every lie against

* The state of our manufactories bears witness to the first. As to the second, perhaps England is at present the only country in which the cure of souls is sold at the auction mart, on the same principle as shares in banks or railways. The same office that will give you information as to the one affords information for the most eligible investment of money as to the other.

[Additional note, 1904. This was the case when these words were written in 1843. Since then some of the worst evils connected with the sale of advowsons have been abolished, but the buying and selling is still permitted, and is advertised in clerical journals.

The reference to the factories, etc., of that period expresses the indignation that was then generally felt at the discovery of a horrible state of things which was afterwards removed by legislation chiefly through the noble efforts of the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury.]

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God's truth together with schools, and hospitals,* and pleasant pictures, and parks, and gardens, and everything that can solace nature apart from God. Let all this be exhibited in Babylon, as it is now being exhibited elsewhere, and the description of God in this chapter would be fully answered.

There was a late occasion† in which a great mercantile army supplied with all the resources that Western skill and civilization could give, was resting in fancied security amidst wild hordes of barbarians in the East. They were suddenly assailed by this despised and unsuspected foe—a panic, I suppose, from God, fell upon them. "They forebore to fight," and were destroyed; and one only escaped to tell the tale. Events of this kind do not happen without God: they afford to us a warning; they teach us of that coming hour, when God will again give it in

* I do not mean that these things are in themselves evil—but when philanthropy confines itself to meeting the natural wants of men *merely*—it is most evil.

† In Afghanistan. [In 1837 a mission had been sent thither with a purely commercial object in view, under Capt. Alex. Burnes, a relative of Burns the poet. The home government appear to have controlled it unwisely, and when political difficulties arose, a military force had to be sent from India, which, however, was not well officered. In the winter of 1841-2, after an assault by the natives, all the British left Cabul. They started on the 6th January, 16,500 in number, British, Sepoys and followers, towards Jellalabad, over the snowy and mountainous defiles. By the 13th all were killed except one—a Dr. Bryden, who on that day reached that city weak and faint, hardly able to sit on his exhausted horse. The terrible and humiliating story may be read in any History of modern England—Spencer Walpole's, Bright's, etc. A full account is in Kaye's Afghanistan.]

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charge to nations of barbarians, to make the city of Eastern and Western civilization their prey. "Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Aschenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars. Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion. And the land shall tremble and sorrow; for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant. The mighty men of Babylon have foreborne to fight—they have remained in their holds; their might hath failed—they became as women: they have burned her dwelling-places; her bars are broken. One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end; and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, the daughter of Babylon is like a threshing-floor; it is time to thresh her: yet a little while and the time of her harvest shall come." But although its destruction commences thus by the assembling of these nations by the secret providence of God, yet a more terrible visitation follows from the Lord Himself, for the capture of Babylon by

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these barbarous nations merges into the day of visitation from the Lord. And therefore the same words which commissions some upon the earth to assemble their earthly armies—saying, "Lift *ye* up a banner upon the high mountains, exalt *ye* the voice unto them, shake *ye* the hand that they may go into the gates of the nobles," speak also of another unearthly host whom the Lord Himself assembles, "*I* have commanded my sanctified ones, *I* have also called *my* mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness." These are they who give the final blow to Babylon, when "the Lord shall punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; when He shall cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." They will be the hosts of heaven, not of earth. (Jer. li. 27 to 33; Isa. xiii. 2 to 11).

We cannot wonder at the severity of the Lord's judgments upon Babylon, when we remember that she commenced in the beginning that course of wickedness, the maturity of which she concentrates at the close. The building of the tower of Babel was the first act of proud defiance of God, that the earth witnessed after the flood. It was the work of men who determined to make themselves great in the earth apart from God; and when she recovered from the blow then inflicted, and was allowed under Nebuchadnezzar to arise into supremacy, the course of that monarch, who glorified *himself* and destroyed the people of God, became the great ensample of the

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character of Babylon to the end. "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out. The violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say." This relation to Israel, Babylon will retain when held under the dominion of the last great monarch "who shall take away the daily sacrifice, and plant the abomination that maketh desolate;" and therefore when Israel begin to sing their song of deliverance, they say, "How hath the oppressor ceased, *the golden city* ceased." This, it is said, is their song over the *king of Babylon.* And we know from many parts of Scripture that it is not Israel merely that Antichrist will persecute, but also they "who have the faith of Jesus." (Rev. xiv.)

Before also her subjugation to Antichrist, and whilst her own characteristic system yet prevails, whilst "the woman rides upon the beast," we find her "drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." And we cannot wonder at this; for when we remember the dark death-like night of silence, as to God's truth, that will prevail under the system of Babylon, a silence valued because it does not disturb, we may easily suppose that the aggressiveness which love to souls, as well as a regard to the commandment of God

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must give to *faithful* Christianity, would necessarily bring upon itself the full hatred of a system that is resolved, at whatsoever cost, to obtain for itself repose. Some faithful Christianity will be found, especially in a few who will be called out for the Lord in Jerusalem, in the very heart of the prophetic earth. They will testify of the coming of the Lord—of the grace that is in the blood of Jesus—of the condition of the nations—of the character of the Church, as "the pearl," pure and separate from the defilements of the earth; and their testimony will be with power, and Satan will come to crush it—and he *will* crush it, by means of the kingdoms over which the woman rules, and will then exalt Antichrist unto the throne. (See chap. xii.) We need not wonder, therefore, that it should be said of Babylon, that in her was "found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth."

Such are the present prospects of the earth. The saints have to wait patiently, and keep the word of the endurance of Christ. Endurance is just the opposite habit to hers who saith, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Gold, and silver, and scarlet, and purple, and fine linen, are spread for the saints, not in Babylon, but in the sanctuary of God. There they know these things, as types of heavenly excellencies, which already surround their risen High Priest for *them*. Yet a little while, and they will go to dwell in that city whose gates are of pearl and its streets of gold, as it were

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transparent glass, themselves pure as the gates through which they pass—glorious also and excellent as the streets on which they tread: there to become the centre of the new and everlasting system of God, when Babylon shall be cast as a millstone into the waters, to fall and to rise no more.

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CHAPTER XXV.

Notes on Revelation XVII.

"*And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying, 'Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great harlot,'*" &c.] This is another instance of *recurrence* to that which had been spoken of before. In preceding chapters, the *destruction* of Babylon had been mentioned, whereas in this and in the following chapter, we find her described during the time of her exaltation and glory. The same angel that had before been seen as the administrator of the vial of wrath, now comes to teach John respecting the nature of the wickedness that merited so great destruction; for God is pleased to justify His ways to us. He seeks that we should understand and appreciate the reasons of His judgments. Yet our negligence may in this also frustrate the desires of His goodness.

"*The great harlot that sitteth upon many waters.*"] The "many waters" are said to symbolise "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." See verse 15. This shows the wide extent over which

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the influence of this evil system will spread. Its influence will not be less extensive than that of Antichrist when he shall have arisen into the height of his individual power.

The mere circumstance that there is at present no one system, or one individual dominant over the countries indicated by the ten horns of the beast, is a fact alone sufficient to prove the futurity of this vision. We must *remember*, too, that there is no *gradual waning* of the power either of the harlot or of Antichrist. Both are SUDDENLY destroyed—the harlot, by Antichrist—Antichrist, by the coming of the Lord. If the harlot were reigning now, *all* the Roman world, Eastern and Western, would be at this present moment entirely subject to her dominion. If she had perished, the *whole* Roman world would be now under the fell power of Antichrist, as described in Revelation xiii. If Antichrist had perished, we should be now in the millennium. For further evidence of the futurity of this chapter, see "Babylon and Egypt; their Future History," etc.

"*The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.*"] This would not have been said of a warlike system, nor of any system that worried and oppressed the nations, or galled them with a religious or any other yoke. But it is a description that well suits a system that enriches the nations by commerce, causes them to live deliciously, studies the comforts and interests of

men as men, and takes care that even the claims of Truth should not disturb the general tranquility.

John was taken into the wilderness in order to see this vision. If we forsake the city of man's greatness, and go without the camp bearing the reproach of Jesus, and morally dwell in the wilderness, we shall find little difficulty in understanding this vision and appreciating the truthfulness of its description.

"*And I saw a woman.*"] This woman, who sat "upon a scarlet beast, full of names of blasphemy," herself arrayed "in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a cup of gold in her hand full of abominations, and the filthiness of her fornication," will be to Babylon —the city of man, what the woman "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars," will be to Jerusalem —"the city of the great King."

I have already remarked that "a woman" is a *moral* symbol. See notes on chapter xii. It is the symbol of the characteristic moral system of the place or people spoken of. A city may exist without *its own characteristic* system, and may derive its regulations elsewhere, as Babylon will during the time of the individual supremacy of Antichrist; and as Jerusalem will at that same period: or they may co-exist, as Jerusalem and its own glorious system will, when the millennium comes; and as the harlot and the city Babylon do in this seventeenth chapter.

Consequently, during the time of which the seventeenth chapter treats, it can be truly said, that the harlot represents "*that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth*," for the harlot and the city are united then—she is the city *morally*: but *after* the harlot has been destroyed, and the city of Babylon has lost its own distinguishing system, and gains its formative principles elsewhere, *i.e.* from Antichrist, these words could no longer be used. A city will then cease to rule over the kings of the earth; Antichrist being raised into supremacy. The moral condition of the city of Babylon, and of the nations whose head Babylon will be, will not be improved, but rather made worse by losing its own system, and receiving the fulness of Antichristianism instead.

The history, however, of the system of God's city Jerusalem, is blessedly contrasted with that of Babylon's system, in this—when Babylon's system is separated from *its* city, it perishes, and perishes for ever. But when Jerusalem's system is separated from *its* city, as it even now is, it does not perish. It is indeed outcast in the earth—no eye but the eye of faith recognises its beauty; but it exists, and there are some eyes that see it, and some hearts that love and cleave to it; and they shall continue to cleave to it until the hour comes for it to be united to its own city, and to be exalted in the earth. Then, "all nations shall flow unto it."

"*Having seven heads and ten horns.*"] The horns,

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which represent the kings, are not crowned whilst the beast carries the harlot. The crowns will be at this period on *the heads* of the Dragon, *i.e.* on those *systems* by which Satan will order (just as he is now beginning to do) the affairs of the Roman earth. The diadems may well be said to be on the systems, while the monarchs are merely the servants and functionaries of those systems. But when the monarchs "receive authority as kings at one hour with the beast," the diadems are on the horns. See Rev. xiii. After this it would be impossible for any one who wears one of the ten diadems to be saved.

"*And upon her forehead a name written*, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."] This passage *might* be translated, "*a name written, a mystery*;" but a subsequent verse, viz. "I will show thee the mystery of the woman," &c., seems to show that the term "*mystery*" pertains to the woman, and not merely to her name.

The various "mysteries" mentioned in the New Testament are not allowed to remain unexplained to the children of faith. To *them* they are unfolded and made known. "To you," said our Lord, "*it is given to know* the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." So also here, "*I will tell thee* the mystery of the woman," &c.

When the world shall behold that skilful and attractive system which the harlot symbolises,

extending its wondrous influence over the civilised world—when they shall see it also sustained and administered by an individual like Antichrist, who will then first appear, distinguished, intellectually and otherwise, by powers such as men have never before beheld, they will little think such a system and such an individual to be what this chapter declares. They will understand this "mystery" as little as they understand "the mystery of godliness."

But there is yet another reason why the word "mystery" should be applied to this system. The Apostle Paul in 2 Thess. ii. had spoken "of the mystery of lawlessness" as even then secretly working. He had spoken of a period when this mystery, then hidden, should appear "out of the midst" (ἐκ μέσου), and become developed, and that, at the time when Antichrist likewise should appear. The Prophet Zechariah also prophesying of a time subsequent to the Apostle, had described the woman as "*shut up*" in the ephah together with "wickedness." Thus we have three stages marked in the history of the mystery of iniquity—first, when it was secretly working in the midst of society in the Apostle's days; secondly, when it becomes secretly connected with the ephah; thirdly, when it ceases to be hidden and becomes developed, as described in this chapter. Seeing then that that which in its two previous stages had been a mystery *hidden*, had now become a mystery *developed*, the word mystery might

well be written on the woman's brow. It identified her as that of which prophets and apostles had spoken—once having her principles hidden, but now manifested and applied.

The passage to which I have referred in 2 Thess. ii. is, strictly translated, as follows: "And ye know that at present there is that which restraineth, in order that he, *i.e.* Antichrist, might be revealed in his appointed season (and not before). For the mystery of lawlessness is already working (only there is at present one that restraineth) until it become developed out of the midst, and then shall the Lawless one be revealed," &c. It is important to observe the translation which I have given of the words ἑώς ἐκ μέσου γένηται, *donec E medio fiat*, not *DE medio*;—until it (that is, the mystery of iniquity, which is now secretly working in the midst of society) become developed. When we speak of a person who had been hidden in a crowd appearing "out of the midst" of that crowd—or when we speak of a horn springing "out of" the head of an animal, there is in neither of these cases any thought of *removal* or *taking away*, but simply of *manifestation*. So is it in the present instance. That which is now working secretly in the midst of men, is soon to come forth in palpable development, and then it will cease to be a *hidden* mystery any longer.

There is nothing in the words ἐκ μέσου to signify removal or taking away. They mean simply *e medio* —*out of the midst*. In other passages they are con-

nected with the words *ἁρπάζω, to snatch away* (Acts xxiii. 10); or with *αἴρω, to take away* (Col. ii. 14); and in these cases there is, of course, the sense of separation or removal—a sense derived entirely from the word which is appended to *ἐκ μέσου*, and not from *ἐκ μέσου* itself. The word with which it is connected in the Thessalonians, viz. *γένηται*, has not at all the sense of *removal*, but rather of origin or existence. See also *ἐξέλθετε ἐκ μέσου* in 2 Cor. vi. 17.

If the translation be thus corrected, "the mystery of iniquity" becomes the nominative to *γένηται*. The words, "only there is at present one that restraineth," are in a parenthesis—*τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον ἤδη ἐνεργεῖται τῆς ἀνομίας (μόνον ὁ κατέχων ἄρτι) ἕως ἐκ μέσου γένηται, καὶ τότε*, &c.—for the mystery of lawlessness is already working (only there is at present one that restraineth), *and will so continue to work* until it be developed out of the midst, and then shall that Lawless one be revealed, &c. For further remarks on the *whole* of 2 Thess. ii. see "Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman Empire," page 272, second ed.

"*Drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus,*" *&c.*] These words clearly show that this rising system will become a fierce persecutor before its course is run. Protestantism, even in its best days, sought refuge in the secular arm rather than in God. It has wished that

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"congresses should supersede councils," and it will have its desire: but congresses are not God. "A bishop (says Cranmer) may make a priest by the Scripture, and so may princes and governors also, and that by the authority of God committed to them." Can we wonder at the failure of Protestantism after this? Nevertheless God's truth is among the Protestants—and through that truth there will arise some who will refuse to have the voice of their testimony silenced, and whose aggressiveness will disturb the quiet of the Babylonish system, and so furnish an excuse for its persecutions; and thus many a Protestant will be made to prove that they who lean upon any thing instead of God, lean upon a broken reed, which is sure to run into the hand and pierce it. The proud secular power, after having long struggled with and at last effectually subdued into obedience the great ecclesiastical systems of the whole earth, will ill brook the interference of a few despised saints. The irreligion too of liberalism has never disliked that real Christianity should be restrained and punished.

"*The beast which thou sawest, was and is not*," &c.] Several explanations have been given of this passage.

Some have supposed that it implies that Antichrist is a person who has already lived, and will be raised again from the dead; but this notion, although very prevalent in the early centuries, as indeed it still is, appears to have no sufficient warrant from Scripture.

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Others consider that it refers to Antichrist, not as an individual, but in his official capacity as Imperial Head of the Roman world. It this sense he may be said to have existed, to cease to exist, and to exist again. He is Cæsar revived. If this interpretation be adopted, it is necessary to regard the words, "was, is not, &c." as having no specific chronological reference, but as a general expression denoting possession of existence, cessation of existence, and existence recovered.

The difficulty in the way of giving a definite chronological interpretation to the words, "IS NOT" is this—if the time were supposed to be that at which John beheld the vision, the Imperial Head of the Roman Empire had not then ceased to exist. If, on the other hand, as is common in prophecy, we are supposed to be in the midst of the scene prophesied of, the words IS NOT would be scarcely applicable in a chronological sense to Antichrist, when possessed of that measure of power which is ascribed to him in this chapter; although it is undoubtedly true that he will not have reached the full development of his imperial character, nor attain, if I may use the expression, his Cæsar-standing, until he has passed through the condition described in this chapter. In that sense his rise into his distinguishing greatness is certainly described in this chapter as future.

Another interpretation is, that the words "was and is not," are not to be taken in any chronological

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sense, but as a formula expressive of transitoriness of existence; opposed, therefore, to the words "who was, and is, and is to come," as applied to the Eternal One. In this sense, faith, placing itself forward at the hour of the great consummation, would say of Antichrist, even at the time of his most established glory, "he was, and is not." "Behold, at evening-time trouble; and before the morning, he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us." (Isa. xvii. 14.)

If we adopt this last interpretation, the passage would be translated and punctuated as follows: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not. And he is about to ascend out of the bottomless pit and to go into perdition. And they that dwell upon the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast which was, and is not. And he shall be present."

Another explanation, unattended by any of the difficulties which attach more or less to all the interpretations already given, is this—that Antichrist is here regarded as about to be a second Nebuchadnezzar, or a revived head of Babylon, which he becomes as soon as he has destroyed the woman. Accordingly, Antichrist in the Old Testament prophets is continually called the king of Babylon, and the Assyrian. See, for example, Isaiah xiv. 3: "It shall come to pass when the Lord shall give thee (Israel) rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and

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from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb *against the king of Babylon*, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased!" &c.

In the same chapter he is called the Assyrian, as being the last head of Assyria: "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass: as I have purposed so shall it stand; that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burthen depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations." See also Isaiah x. 5, 24; Isaiah xxx. 31 and 33. See also Jeremiah l. throughout.

We can easily suppose how all the earth will wonder when they see not only Babylon and Assyria but a king of Babylon restored and reigning over the whole Roman world. If this interpretation, which I doubt not is the correct one, be received, the passage will read thus: "The beast that thou sawest, was and is not, and is about to ascend out of the abyss and to go into perdition; and those who dwell on the earth shall wonder whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, because he was, and is not, and will be present."

The history of Nebuchadnezzar is necessarily related to that of Antichrist. Nebuchadnezzar was

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the first king of that Gentile dynasty which Antichrist concludes. Antichrist inherits that power which was first committed to Nebuchadnezzar as the golden head of the image shown to Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar was the first "treader down" of Israel —Antichrist the last. Nebuchadnezzar raised an image, and caused it to be worshipped, destroying those who refused—so will Antichrist. Nebuchadnezzar was the spring of Babylon's energies—so will be Antichrist. The offences which Nebuchadnezzar commenced against Israel and Israel's God, are said in Jeremiah to be finally punished when the last king of Babylon—Antichrist, is smitten [xxv. 13, 14].

It is worthy of note too, that the power of Nebuchadnezzar, after he had conquered Tyre, touched almost all the countries of the Roman world over which Antichrist will reign. The commercial energy of the Phœnicians had reached and planted colonies in almost every country of the Roman world. Nebuchadnezzar succeeding to their power, thus forshadowed the dominion which, in its Roman shape, will finally accrue to his last great heir.* Well, therefore, may Antichrist be considered as the monarch of Babylon revived. He was—he is not—but he will again be present.

"*Seven mountains.*"] "Seven mountains" are to the woman, *i.e.* Babylon *morally*, what seven heads

* See "Note on Early Diffusion of Commerce and the Hebrew Language" in "Babylon and Egypt," p. 613.

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are to the beast. In either case, completeness of governmental influence is symbolised—possessed by her as the mistress—by him as the executive servant.

"Mountain" is continually used in Scripture in connection with the thought of legislative or governmental authority. *Mount* Sinai was the place on which God descended when He first legislated for Israel. When the Lord Jesus legislated for His disciples He went up into a *mountain*. *Mount* Zion is mentioned throughout the Psalms and the Prophets as the seat of divine authority and rule in the millennial day. "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the *mountain* of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains [*i.e.* in supremacy over all other seats of authority] and shall be exalted above the hills. . . . For out of Zion shall go forth the law," &c. (Isa. ii.) Again, in Psalm ii.: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy *hill* of Zion." In Psalm lxxii. it is said, "The *mountains* shall bring peace to the peoples, and the little *hills*, by means of righteousness," *i.e.* in the reign of the Lord Jesus, the greater and the lesser seats of authority shall minister peace to all peoples, because righteousness shall be there. Again, in Psalm lxxv.: "Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck, for promotion [literally *mountains*, הרים] cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south; but God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another."

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The woman being said to sit on seven mountains, indicates that Babylon *moral* (in other words, the system which makes Babylon what she will be governmentally) will be sovereign mistress of everything that could be deemed a seat or centre of governmental influence in the earth.

In this chapter Babylon *moral* (or *Babylonianism*, in the same sense as we say Romanism) is said to be seated

I. On many waters.
II. On the beast.
III. On seven mountains.

Now inasmuch as we are not accustomed to say because of this, that Babylon *physically* is builded on many waters, or on the beast (which would be impossible and absurd), so no proof could be drawn from this, that Babylon *physical* would be builded on seven hills.

Whenever Babylonianism is the mistress of all the seats of governmental influence, ecclesiastical, military, monetary, legislative, educational, and the like, she will sit (to use the symbolic language of this chapter) on "seven mountains."

It is true, indeed, that there were in Babylon of old, artificial piles made to resemble mountains of greater height than any of the hills of Rome. It is possible that such may again exist in Babylon, and be made the seats of those structures that will form the centres of Babylon's governmental influence.

This *may* be, but it is not necessary to fulfil the words of this chapter.

Rome has chosen to style herself the "seven-hilled city:" but it is mere assumption. No seven hills are there. Peaks of the same hill are made hills; in other words, the same hill is reckoned twice over in order to make out the number. Babylon had far more reason to boast of her mountains than Rome. For further observations on this subject, see "Babylon, its Future History," etc., p. 118.

All completeness of authority, at the period of which this chapter treats, is possessed by the mighty system that will at that time be established in Babylon. Babylonianism will rule. But this system will have for its executive agent the individual here described. Of course all the authority that is possessed by a system, subordinately attaches to the person who gives effect to that system. Hence the beast who carries the woman, has in his "seven heads" the symbol of the same completeness of authority as is represented, in relation to the woman, by the "seven mountains." This concentration of *all* authority is found in no present system—in no present individual.

"*And there are seven kings; the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come; and when he shall have come, he must continue a short space.*"] This is a parenthetic, or, to speak perhaps more correctly, an epenthetic or additional verse, treating of a subject

entirely distinct from that of the previous verse, where the "seven mountains" are mentioned.

Authority is one thing; the mode of its exercise is another. The latter has been a subject of as much contention among men as the former; for when power exists, the next question always is *how*, and *by whom* it is to be exercised. The mention of the beast *through* whom the authority is exercised during the reign of the harlot, and *by* whom it is exercised afterward during the period of his sole dominion, had necessarily introduced the subject of *executive* power. The history of executive power must in part be retrospective. Accordingly, this verse referring to the first and last forms in which executive authority is exercised in the prophetic earth, treats of *successive* forms of kingship exercised through a series of ages, and closed by Antichrist; whereas the former verse, (under the symbol of "the seven mountains," and "seven heads of the beast") treats of that which forms the *basis* of the harlot's and the beast's power, and which, so far from extending through successive ages, exists only during the comparatively brief period of her and his dominion.

As regards executive power, God has allowed it to be exhibited in seven different forms in the prophetic earth, and there will yet be another before the end comes. The history of executive power or kingship in the prophetic earth, commences with Nimrod, and ends with Antichrist; the first and the last whose names stand connected with Babel.

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The native monarchy of Nimrod—the theocracy of Israel—the systematic despotic monarchy of Nebuchadnezzar, which was, in a peculiar sense, established by God—the aristocratic monarchy of Persia—the military monarchy of Alexander—the empire of the Cæsars, which arose out of democracy—and the clay-iron or constitutional monarchies of modern Europe, are the seven forms which have already appeared. The sixth, viz. that of the Cæsars, was existent when the Revelation was given; the seventh, though it has appeared, has not yet been perfected; the eighth, which is reserved for Antichrist, closes the scene.

It should be observed that the periods at which the Scripture recognises these monarchies as formed, are the periods in which they assume their full and proper characters. For example, Greece is not known in Scripture until Alexander; nor Rome until Augustus Cæsar; consequently, the oligarchic, aristocratic, and democratic contests in Greece, out of which Alexander's military monarchy sprung, are not mentioned, neither the similar contests at Rome, which ended in the supremacy of the Cæsars and their successors; neither the feudal and democratic struggles of Europe which are still being continued, and will finally end in establishing (as has long been the case in England) popular-monarchic or constitutional governments throughout the ten kingdoms of the Roman world. This we know from the express statement of Daniel; for *all* the toes of the image

were "iron mixed with miry clay." The countries where at present the principle of representative government is more or less recognised, are England, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, Piedmont [*i.e.*, *since* 1870, Italy], and Greece.

Some have endeavoured to alter the translation of this passage, and, instead of reading this verse as epenthetic, have attached it to the foregoing thus: "the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, and are seven kings." But it should have been remembered that "the mountains" or "heads" are *cotemporaneous*, not *successive;* whereas the seven or rather eight kings are emphatically *successive*.—"Five have fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come"—the beast is the eighth. Besides which the beast, who is the eighth of these successive kings, cannot symbolise the same thing as one of his heads, which would be the case if the proposed translation were adopted. Some also have spoken of an "*eighth* head:" but that is altogether a mistake. There is no such thing as an eight-headed beast; in that case there would have been eight mountains too. The beast has *seven* heads, and the woman sits on *seven* mountains—heads and mountains symbolising the same thing, viz. seats of governmental power, of which he, as representing the eighth and last form of executive power (in other words, being the eighth king) becomes finally the sole possessor.

"*And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the*

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eighth and is of (ἐκ) *the seven, and goeth into perdition.*"] All who remember the use of this word (eighth) in Leviticus and elsewhere will know, that whilst it implies the commencement of something new, yet that it represents that new thing as connected with and springing out of that which has preceded. There could be no resurrection without previous existence —no eighth day unless seven had preceded. The era of Antichrist will pretend to bring to the world just what the day of resurrection will really bring to the saints—satisfying and enduring blessing. Antichrist will be "the day-star" of their hopes. He will profess to be the "son of the morning." But their new day will soon set in the blackness of darkness for ever.

"*And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have not yet received a kingdom.*"] These must not be confused with the seven or rather eight kings of the preceding verse. Those seven kings were not co-existent, but the ten will be; neither were they seen as part of the vision, *for they are represented by no symbol.* They represent classes of governors in the history (for the most part the *past* history) of executive power, and nothing is said of their own individual history: whereas this verse contains the *future* history (future even at the period when the woman shall have been manifested) of the ten cotemporary kings who, during the period of which the *seventeenth* chapter treats, are uncrowned—in other

words, have no *proper* royal authority; but receive it as soon as Antichrist receives his supreme authority, viz. at the moment when he and they together concur in destroying the woman. These are they who, gathered around *their* lord of lords and king of kings (the eighth king of the preceding series) will actually defy the true "Lord of lords and King of kings," when His saints and Himself shall be manifested in their glory. (See chap. xix.)

It should be observed that the right reading of the sixteenth verse is as follows: "And the ten horns which thou sawest AND THE BEAST—these shall hate the harlot," &c. For evidence as to this correction see Tregelles' Critical Greek Testament.

Some have objected to the translation, "they receive power as kings at one hour (*μίαν ὥραν*) with the beast," on the ground that the accusative is used to signify duration of time, and not point of time. This, however, is not true *as regards the New Testament.* It is used to signify both. See Acts x. 3: *ὡσεὶ ὥραν ἐννάτην*—"*about the ninth hour.*" Also Acts x. 30: "*At the ninth hour I prayed.*"

"*The woman which thou sawest is that great city which is sovereign over the kings of the earth.*] This verse identifies the reigning city here spoken of with the woman and her greatness. The city is spoken of not merely as reigning, but as reigning after the manner symbolised by the woman. Will any say that this was the condition of Rome when the

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Apostle wrote? If this had been the condition of Rome then, it would be her condition now; or else Antichrist would have destroyed her, and be himself supreme over the whole Roman earth.

Moreover, Imperial Rome never held the kind of power here described. The special characteristic of the woman's power is, that it is supreme over all the executive instruments of her government, even over the beast on whom she rides. Was this the relation of the Cæsars to Rome? Did Rome, or Rome's system, rule over *them?* Just the reverse. Ecclesiastical Romanism has sought to reign thus, but it has never succeeded, even in its own limited sphere, much less throughout the whole Roman world. Latitudinarian Babylonianism will attain a greatness that Romanism has sought in vain.

This verse, therefore, was not true at the time when John saw the vision. It is a prophetic verse, true when the woman shall have been manifested, and not before.

The following note on the words "which reigneth" is transcribed from "Aids to Prophetic Enquiry," second series, 1849.

In commenting on this passage, some have insisted that the words "*which reigneth*" should be taken in a strictly present sense; and thence have argued that the city must be Rome—Imperial Rome—which was supreme when the Apostle wrote.

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But they seem to have forgotten that in a prophetic vision, which avowedly directs the mind to something that is future, every word that speaks of that future thing as present must, by the necessity of the case, begin to apply only when that future thing is developed. Thus, in the twenty-first chapter, it is said—"the first heaven and first earth have passed away (ἀπῆλθαν), and the sea no longer is." (ἔστι) The last word is strictly in the present tense; yet no one would think of applying it to any but a future period. See also the second verse of chapter xii., where "*crieth*" (κράζει) and the rest of the verbs are in the present tense, although belonging to a future period.

In the seventeenth chapter the vision is not concerning the woman alone. It also has reference to the beast that carries her. This fixes the chronology of the vision as future; for the beast is said to be the *eighth* of that line of kings of which John was living under the *sixth*. Besides which, I have already shown that it is *impossible* that either the woman or the beast should symbolize Imperial Rome. (See page 112 of "Babylon, its Future History," etc., third ed.)

Even then, if the present indicative (ἥτις βασιλεύει) were here used in its strictly present sense, the chronology of the vision would still render the reference future. But the present indicative is not used. It is the present participle; a tense, appropriated, I may almost say, in the Greek Testament,

to the expression of ideas that are *abstract* and independent of any particular time. In Hebrew also it is continually used for the same purpose.

In every language it is necessary that there should be some means of expressing *abstract* notions. In English they are commonly signified by one form of our present indicative; the forms of that tense being three, *e.g. I walk—am walking—do walk.* The first of these is used to convey the abstract thought. If it were said to me, "Do you walk or ride?" and my reply were, "I walk," no one would understand me to mean that I was at that moment engaged in the act of walking. I might perhaps be sitting still when I said it. I should have used the present tense in an abstract sense, without reference to time —my meaning being that it was my habit to walk and not to ride.

The tense that peculiarly implies this in Hebrew is the present participle (Pohail); and in Greek, the present participle, or perfect middle participle. The present indicative is also frequently used, as in English, in the abstract sense; but in such cases the sense is marked as being abstract, either by the use of the present participle in connection therewith, or by the nature of the subject. The Epistles of John and his Gospel afford abundant instances of this.

The following are examples of the use of the present participle in this abstract sense, and will show how independent it is of fixed time.

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"*They are dead—the seekers of the young child's life.*"

Οἱ ζητοῦντες. We cannot translate this present participle as if it were the past—nor could we say of dead persons that they *are seeking* the life of another. The abstract form therefore is used, independent of time, denoting that the persons referred to were so inherently characterised by hatred of that holy child, that even when dead they are marked as "seekers of his life."

"*The Son of man, ὁ ὢν, not ὅς ἐστι, in heaven.*"

As regarded His personal presence, the Son of man was on earth, not in heaven, when these words were spoken. But in consequence of that which He *essentially* was as divine; He was the I AM, the Being-one in heaven.

"*Behold the Lamb of God, ὁ αἴρων, the sin of the world.*"

Ὁ αἴρων neither means *who is taking away* (ὅς αἴρει), nor *who hath taken away* (ὅς ἦρκεν). In that case all the world must be saved. It denotes that He, of whom these words are spoken, is One to whom the title or office of being the taker-away of sin is *appropriated.* Even when there is not the same strict sense of appropriated office, as in the instance now given, the abstract form of expression is used. Thus we say: "the King, the conquering one;" or "the King, the conqueror"—expressions which convey a thought different from that which is implied by saying, the King who is *conquering*, or the King who *has conquered.*

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"*This is my body, τὸ κλώμενον, for you.*"

The Papists, or Puseyites, argue on this word as if it were *ὃ κλᾶται*, which *is being at this moment broken.* If it were so, it would prove nothing on their behalf; but even the semblance of an argument is taken away when the proper abstract force of the participle is apprehended. His body was one to which, by necessity of divine appointment, "breaking" attached. It had become a characteristic attribute of that holy body.

Instances are equally abundant in the Hebrew.

"*Thou that art the dweller between the cherubim.*"

יושב—not the relative and indicative. The words occur in one of the repentant Psalms of Israel, after the temple had been forsaken. Yet Jehovah is still addressed, not as one who *is dwelling* there at that moment, but as one who has, through His faithful grace, that inalienable relation to His land and people. (Ps. lxxx.)

"*Behold, I creating or the Creator of* (בורא) *new heavens and a new earth.*" (Isa. lxv. 18.)

He thus addresses Israel at the commencement of the millennium, a thousand years before the new heavens and earth are made. Indeed, even in cases where the action is present, the abstract form is used in Hebrew in addressing Jehovah, or in addressing kings, because it is more reverential—seeing that it assigns lasting and not transitory attributes. In the

passage before us it is not difficult to apprehend the meaning of ἡ ἔχουσα βασιλείαν—"who hath sovereignty over the kings of the earth." The force of the expression is titular and ascriptive, implying far more than "*who is reigning*." The very distinctive characteristic of the city spoken of will be, that through its system it will be, avowedly and by acknowledgment, sovereign over crowns. She will hold and exercise sovereignty as if by inherent right over the kings of the Roman earth.

Revelation xviii. 1. "*Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great.*"] These words refer, not to the destruction of the woman, but of the city itself. I have already said that the woman represents the city *morally, i.e.* as to its characteristic system, which is destroyed, not by the nations that capture Babylon, but by Antichrist, three years and a half before the city falls.

That the symbol is changed in the eighteenth chapter from a woman to a city (though a city is still a feminine symbol), is evident from the language employed; for if the symbol had been still a woman, it would not have been said, "Come out of her, my people," &c.; nor that she had become the "habitation of devils, and the hold of every unclean spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Compare with this the conclusion of Isaiah xiii. It would seem that Babylon is to remain, whilst Immanuel's land teems with blessing, a memorial,

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throughout the whole millennium, of the judgment which God's hand has executed on the works of man's evil in former generations.

The preface of this chapter, as in other visions, is in time later than the verses that succeed. In the second verse it is said, "Babylon *hath* fallen,"—"*hath* become," &c.; whereas in the third and seventh verses we go back to present time—"She *saith* in her heart," &c. The preface continues to the end of the third verse. Faith has always to view the city of man's greatness according to this testimony of her final judgment.

"*Come out of her, my people,*" *&c.*] In a former edition, I regarded these words as addressed to a remnant of Israel who are to be delivered when Babylon falls: but, on further consideration, they appear to me to have a wider and more important application, as being addressed to those who have wisdom and grace to discern the signs of the times and to quit the sphere of moral danger and temptation, before (like Lot in Sodom) they are driven out by the actual intervention of judgment. The delivered remnant of Israel are plainly referred to in such a passage as this: "The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon to declare in Zion, the vengeance of the Lord our God, the vengeance of his temple." Such "flight and escaping" will not pertain to those who give heed to the previous warning.

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There seems to be a remarkable analogy in the circumstances connected with the final visitation on Babylon, and that on Jerusalem. It appears from Zechariah xii. and Joel ii., that when the hostile armies of Gentiles are on the point of seizing on Jerusalem for the last time, not only does the Lord Himself visibly interfere, but He also causes a remnant of Israel to become strong, like Gideon of old, with the strength of God, and employs them against His and their enemies. Part of the tribe of Judah, which is without the walls of Jerusalem, leagued with the invading Gentiles in fighting against Jerusalem,* will be first saved and strengthened and made like "a torch of fire in a sheaf;" and next the house of David and the inhabitants of the city in Jerusalem, will be made strong in the strength of God, and they shall destroy their enemies.

At Babylon also we find that, after the city has been captured, and the visitation of the Lord supervenes on the capture, Israel is strengthened by the Lord, and becomes one of the weapons of His indignation against His enemies. Hence the words of Jeremiah, "Thou (Jacob) art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms. And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider, and with thee will I break in pieces the

* See Zechariah xii. 2, which literally translated is as follows: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the peoples round about; and also against Judah shall it (the cup of trembling) be in the siege against Jerusalem."

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chariot and his rider: with thee also will I break in pieces man and woman, and with thee will I break in pieces old and young, and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid. I will also break in pieces with thee, the shepherd and his flock, and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen, and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers; and I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldæa all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the Lord." (Jer. li. 20.)

The progressiveness of the judgment will account for the merchants, &c., standing afar off and witnessing her destruction: but another visitation soon follows which includes them also, and a man is made more precious than fine gold, even a man than a golden wedge of Ophir—so great and universal is the destruction from the hand of the Lord Himself.

"*And the kings of the earth,*" *&c.*] The influence of Babylon will doubtless be felt widely throughout the world: but it will be the *metropolis* of the Roman earth. The countries included within the Roman earth have been already enumerated, see Notes on Rev. xiii.

It is not at this moment possible to say exactly how these countries will finally be distributed so as to form ten kingdoms: nor can we tell the means whereby it may please God to effect it, whether by war, or by more peaceful and silent methods.

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That part of the Roman empire which the Romans conquered from the Greeks will form the Eastern branch, and that which the Romans subdued in the west will form the Western or Latin branch. Each of these parts may be expected to be divided into five parts, according to the second of Daniel, where the *two* legs of the image ending in the ten toes represent the Roman empire—five toes being on either foot.

The separation of Greece, and the virtual separation of Egypt, have been two of the most remarkable events of our own days; for these countries have now, for the first time since Augustus Cæsar, been separated into the distinctness which the Scripture speaks of their possessing at the time of the end. (Dan. viii. and xi.) The unexpected and almost secret manner in which the change has been effected, especially in Greece, is very remarkable, and strikingly indicates the overruling hand of God. A constitutional government, necessary to give the clay-iron form to that kingdom, has now [1844] been formed there—the king has submitted; and, what is still more remarkable, the Greek Church has submitted, and consented to fall into a kind of subordinate alliance to the crown—just as Popery is being obliged to do in France,* and the Establishments in Scotland and England. For it must

* Recent events [1853] may seem to require a modification of this statement; but we have only to wait, and we shall finally see Babylonianism conquer Romanism in France and every other country of the Roman earth.

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be remembered that popular monarchy is not more characteristic of this Babylonish system, than is the alliance of ecclesiastical with the secular power—the latter being supreme. In Spain and in Portugal, efforts have been made to discard the state religion, but in vain: and in both those countries, the attempt now being made is, as in France, to rule *by*, and not without, the religious system of the people. I doubt not it will succeed.

Italy, Austria, and the Turkish empire are evidently the districts in which the greatest changes have to be effected; but Italy is at this present moment [1844] convulsed from end to end,* and Austria has just begun to enter the great commercial system of Europe. The appearance of its first trading vessel in India has lately [1844] been hailed with great delight.

But whilst we learn from all this the characteristic principles of the day, we must take heed not to suppose that events will always proceed slowly and gradually as they are now doing. The preparation and secret spread of principles is one thing—their establishment in power is another. The channels are, I believe, ready in every kingdom of the prophetic earth; and as soon as the system of which we speak is established in the land of Shinar on its own base, we shall find the reservoir opened of these

* [These uprisings of her oppressed peoples, guided by Mazzini, Garibaldi, Cavour, etc., at last effected the union of all Italy under one constitutional king.]

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mighty waters, whereby those channels will be filled, even as in an instant; and waters, very different from those healing streams which shall by and by flow from the holy city, shall be effectually diffused throughout all the appointed sphere.

"*And the merchandise of bodies and the souls of men.*"] A memorable example of the manner in which the lust of commercial gain leads men to sacrifice principles which they themselves have vaunted and extolled, is now seen in America. Some years ago there was no country in which slavery was more abhorred than in America. What then has caused the wondrous change? It was this—the wants of England demanded cotton. England was able and willing to pay for it liberally. It was soon found that cotton could not be raised remuneratively without the labour of slaves. The temptation was too strong for covetousness to resist. The darling principle of America was abandoned, and slavery was established in a form which outrages the coarsest feelings of humanity.* Commerce requires—com-

* [Slavery had been forced upon the American Colonies by England, but after the War of Independence the Constitution of the United States provided for its gradual extinction by A.D. 1808. As one State after another was freeing its slaves the evil appeared to be dying out, when two circumstances unhappily combined to revive it. In England the famous inventions by Hargreaves, Arkwright, and others, of machinery for spinning and weaving caused an enormous demand for cotton: and in America machinery was invented in 1793 for the cotton growers which greatly increased the profits of slave labour. A negro who previously could only prepare one lb. of raw cotton a day could now prepare fifty in the same time. In 1791 the

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merce encourages, the perpetuation of the iniquity. As to "*the souls of men*," they are sure to be sacrificed where their bodies are uncared for. The sympathies of humanity may be enlisted on behalf of the latter, when the former are unthought of; but when the body of a fellow-man is made the victim of remorseless cruelty, what regard would be shown to the soul? Yet America is supposed to be a great, a happy, a prosperous nation. It so thinks of itself. What will it become when it drinks more deeply of the harlot's golden cup?

"*And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth.*"] Latitudinarianism, which will have made Babylon the place in which its plans will be perfected and developed, will necessarily bring on that city this totality of guilt. Do not they who sustain and encourage malefactors make themselves partakers in their guilt? And what ancient or modern system of evil is there that will not be cherished by Babylon? Judaism, Paganism, Romanism, Mahomedanism, will all be sheltered and patronised by Babylon, and therefore the blood-guiltiness of these systems must

United States had produced two million lbs. of cotton; in 1804 eighty millions. Thus the larger demand in England was met by the larger output in America; and, as the cotton States were the slave States, the fetters of the poor negro were riveted more firmly than ever. Two generations were to pass away ere he was liberated, and even then it was only accomplished after a long and desperate Civil War, 1861 to 1865. Slavery is now abolished in the United States.— Life of Pres. Cleveland; Baines' "Cotton Industry" Mackenzie's "America."]

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necessarily attach to that city, which only ceases to be their protector when she gives herself over to the lawless one—the consummator of all iniquity—the fiercest of all persecutors.

"Lawlessness" is the term by which Scripture designates this last and chief development of evil. And with reason. They who, through temptation or otherwise, violate laws which their consciences approve and which their lips outwardly honour, are not indeed to have their guilt palliated; yet their hearts are not so hardened as theirs who refuse to recognise any law of God as binding, who spurn every precept, and break every yoke. Such is "lawlessness."

When men have learned to say, like Pilate, "What is truth?" and justify their carelessness by saying that it is impossible to determine what God approves and what He condemns, they are only one step removed from the state described in Scripture as "lawlessness": for why should the limits which God has drawn between truth and falsehood be respected, if it be impossible to determine what these limits are? The question of Pilate was widely in the lips of educated Pagans when the Lord was on earth. Educated Judaism was beginning to re-echo the cry. "The mystery of lawlessness" had thus far worked when the apostles lived. But its development has been hindered until the same infidel cry should be heard from the midst of professing Christianity too. It *is* being heard. The triple cord of

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Satanic union will soon be formed betwixt heathen, and Jewish, and Christian apostasy. Such union is necessary to the schemes of a commercial age. As soon as these schemes have been systematised and avowed, we shall learn what the establishment of the ephah with the woman and "lawlessness" in her, means.

When these things are confessed, there is hope; but what hope can there be when they are gloried in and defended as right?

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CHAPTER XXVI.

On Revelation XIX., XX., and XXI.

TO EIGHTH VERSE INCLUSIVE.

THE conclusion of each of the visions which we have been considering, from the sixth chapter onwards, has led us to the period called in Scripture, "the end of the age" (Matt. xiii. 39, and xxviii. 20), when the Lord Jesus will come from heaven with His angels, and take His saints to meet Him in the air. Each of the several visions has reached thus far, but has there ended; and it is not until the chapter now before us that we find the results of the Lord's coming, and of the resurrection of the saints, unfolded.

I say the *results* of His coming, and of the resurrection, because neither of these events are themselves described: for the sphere of this chapter is the prophetic, or Roman earth. If it had been otherwise; if its object had been to describe the condition of Christendom at this period, that is, of those nations which will, during the time that Antichrist is reigning in the ten kingdoms, be retaining the profession of the name of Christ, we

should have found His coming with His angels, and the gathering together of His saints carefully described; and accordingly these events are not passed over in those parts of Scripture which *do* give the history and the end of Christendom. (See Matt. xiii.) But this is not the object of the Revelation. It teaches the condition of a certain part of the earth, which after having passed through all the advantages of light and knowledge which attend on the profession of the name of Christ, will have gone on into direct and positive apostasy both from Christ and from God,—an end indeed to which all Christendom *would* come, if the principles there working were allowed time and opportunity to ripen into their full maturity; but one to which part only of Christendom is *allowed* to come, because God is merciful, and sets bounds to this great overflowing of iniquity which it shall not pass. A limited sphere is sufficient to test the character of men, and to make manifest the result of their counsels.

The history, therefore, of that part of the earth which is allowed fully to apostatise from God, and to bear the name of Antichrist, is very different from that of those nations which will retain the acknowledgment of God and of Christ until the end. The tares, for example, which represent neither Jews nor heathens, nor apostate infidels, are never guilty of any act of blasphemous rejection of God. They remain until the end quietly growing by the side

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of the wheat, seeking, as part of the harvest-field, admission into the garners of heaven; and when the hour of the reaping comes, they are not like the apostates, left for a season to be visited by an act of special judgment *in* the earth, but are taken away by angels *out of* the earth, to an unseen place of torment; whereas the apostates, after the earth is reaped both of tares and wheat, are found "gathered together" against Him that sitteth on the horse, and against His army; and, in addition to the punishment which elsewhere awaits them, are visited also by direct visible judgment in the earth—being trampled down in the place where they are assembled, by Him who "treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God." The nineteenth chapter of the Revelation, therefore, commences after the history of Christendom, as elsewhere given, has ended.

Accordingly this chapter opens with one of the great *results* of the resurrection of the saints. They are evidently recognised in the commencement of this chapter as being above with the Lord in glory. "I heard, as it were, the loud voice of a great multitude, saying, Alleluia! the salvation, and glory, and power of our God; for true and righteous are his judgments," &c. This cry of triumph immediately follows the destruction of the great city; and this is in close accordance with the vision in the sixteenth chapter; for there we find the words, "Behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth"—

quickly followed by the pouring out of the seventh vial, under which Babylon is destroyed. The moment when the Lord terminates the history of Christendom, and takes His saints to meet Him in the air, is the moment when He likewise gives His final blow to Babylon. It would seem as though the very first subject of their thanksgiving above, is the judgment of her whom they have so long known as corrupting the earth by her fornication, and shedding the blood of His servants. They had seen and experienced what the earth had been whilst occupied by Babylon and Babylon's mighty king; they are now to behold it under the Lamb and under the heavenly city, the bride of the Lamb: for "the time of his marriage had come, and his wife had made herself ready."

But before any thing more is revealed, either respecting her, or the sphere of her future glory, we have another dark scene to contemplate: for the great transgressor still remained unpunished. The great monarch of the prophetic earth, surrounded by his kings and his armies, those armies which have already been mentioned as gathered at Armageddon, was still existent; and like another Pharaoh, undismayed by all that he had witnessed, was ready still to dispute the title and dare the vengeance of the King of kings and Lord of lords. "I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and his armies, gathered together to make war with him that sat on the horse, and with his army."

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But the hour of the accomplished glory of Jesus had come. "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge, and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many diadems; and he had a name written that no man knoweth, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name hath been called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords."

Such is the description of the glorious power with which the heavenly Bridegroom will be invested, in order that He may prepare this earth, filled though it be with enemies, for the habitation of His bride. He will "go forth conquering, and to conquer." The saints have joined Him, and fall into the train of His glory. He is described in the verses I have quoted, not as in the actual exercise of this power (for the vision is seen in heaven), but as invested with it in order that it might be exercised: and presently afterwards it *is* exercised, first upon Antichrist, then upon Satan, and then upon those

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nations which, as given to be His inheritance and possession, are to be broken with the rod of iron, though not destroyed by the sword of His mouth. It is not a description either of the place or circumstances in which the power is exercised; but it is a vision showing the *character* of power with which He is invested for the government of the earth, and which, in one or other of its forms, He continues to exercise from the beginning to the end of the millennium: I say in one or other of its forms, for though He will not always be treading the wine-press of wrath, yet He will not cease throughout the millennium to employ towards the earth the agency of these heavenly hosts, nor to hold the rod of iron: nor is it until the millennium has finished, that the earth is prepared for the formal introduction of His bride into it: for as we shall presently see, she is not introduced into the *millennial* earth, but into the *new* earth, after the first heavens and the first earth have passed away.

There is something very awful in the cry that summons to the supper of the great God. "I saw an angel standing in the sun" (for it is, as it were, the eye of heaven), "and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the mid-heaven, Come, be gathered together unto the great supper of God: that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of chief-captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men both free and bond, both

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small and great." It is this scene that gives us the true measure of human glory. Every day that passes brings us nearer to the hour in which all who *thus* serve the world and its glory will find themselves (and we know not how soon) taken in the snare, and supplied as food for this last great supper. It is the evening of the day of man. How will its sun set in the blackness of darkness for ever! The energy of man is great, especially when sustained by the immediate indwelling power of Satan, as in that day it will be; but it cannot stand before Him who comes as "King of kings and Lord of lords, and who treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of God the Almighty." "The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet—he that wrought the miracles in his presence, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worship his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire which burneth with brimstone. And the rest were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

But the greatest of all enemies remains even after Babylon and Antichrist have fallen; for Satan as yet continues unbound. From the day when he first deceived Eve by his subtilty, and induced her to mistrust the kindness of God and to trust in him, the history of mankind has been mainly the history of the triumph of his deceptions. The words which

describe the result of his imprisonment in the pit, sufficiently indicate what the previous condition of the nations is, whilst under the influence of his power. "He shall deceive (it is said) the nations no more, till the thousand years have been fulfilled." And if we could only see the hearts that he has tempted and beguiled into destruction, and trace the workings of his hand in making man and all God's creatures miserable, we should be able to form some estimate of the relief which will be felt to extend from one end of creation to the other, when his prey is at last taken from his grasp, and he bound in his prison. Even we who believe have never yet experienced what freedom from his terrible power around us and in us is; and therefore feebly appreciate the blessedness of that hour when there shall be no longer any "lion in the path of the redeemed of the Lord." And since the period which immediately precedes the intervention of the Lord Jesus is peculiarly an hour of strong delusion and of the full energy of Satan's power, the change will be the more marvellous when all the systems by which he has wrought so efficaciously, together with all the unclean spirits which have animated them, will suddenly be swept away, and truth, and grace, and peace, be established instead, in the full unquestioned power of God and the Lord Jesus.

During the whole time that the system of Babylon was in operation, Satan had worn the crowns of the ten kingdoms; and after he had himself been

ejected from heaven, and established Antichrist on his throne, as the centre of his concentrated power, his sway throughout the prophetic earth had been undisputed. His ejection from heaven might have lessened his power as the Accuser (Διαβολος); but it had not lessened his power as the Adversary, (Σατανας). He had arisen as the Adversary, in more mighty power than ever, and caused the kings of the earth and the rulers to rise up with him "against the Lord, and against His Christ, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." He, and the man, his instrument, had practised and prospered. But the hour of his visitation was now come—the hour for the Lord to arise unto judgment, and to help all the meek of the earth. Whatever he had done as the Serpent by his subtilty, or as the Devil (the Accuser), by his malice, or as Satan (the Adversary), whether by secret or developed power, was ended now; and the earth freed from his presence (with the exception of a little season) for ever, was now to experience the consequences of Another's rule, even His, in whose presence is life, who will "open his hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established, that it shall not be moved; He shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the

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wood rejoice before the Lord; for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth." Such will be the song and the exhortation of that day.

It is to the Old Testament, rather than to the Revelation, that we must look for a description of the millennial period. It is not the object of the Revelation to detail the nature of the earthly blessings in result, so much as to declare the heavenly instrumentality by which that result is produced, for this the Old Testament had but dimly and imperfectly revealed. Nor is the millennium itself, in the Revelation, regarded as anything more than a step onward into that more blessed period, called in Scripture "the dispensation of the fulness of times," when sin, and the flesh, and death, shall be finally abolished, and the heavenly city be established in a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The heavenly instrumentality which is to give effect in the millennial earth to those things "which God hath promised by the mouth of all his holy prophets," is found in the heavenly exaltation of Christ in association with His risen saints. The Revelation is the book which describes the nature of the power by means of which they are to act upon the earth in blessing: and accordingly each vision that we have been considering has shown us some one of their manifold glories. But although associated with the Lord in power that is strictly heavenly and divine

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(for else they could not be symbolised by crowned elders sitting on heavenly thrones, nor be as the cherubim) yet they also share with Him His lower glories, as when seen standing around Him on Mount *Zion*; or in a yet lower sphere, as in this chapter, sharing the authority which He will exercise in the earth, as Heir of the throne of David in Jerusalem. To His apostles who followed Him, His promise was, that "in the regeneration," *i. e.* the times of restitution, "when the Son of man should sit on the throne of his glory, they also should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" and in accordance with this promise, we find in this chapter the vision of some, who, after having died under persecution, were raised to share the millennial power which Christ will exercise below the heavens, in the regulation and government of earth; and thus we are taught another feature of glorious power which attaches to the first resurrection, and consequently to all who share in it. "Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they are priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." They who are counted "worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead," are freed from all earthly characteristics and are made like the angels in heaven. They will be strictly unearthly persons; but unearthly persons may act upon the earth; and this will be the secret of the earth's blessing in that day. The inhabitants

of Jerusalem and of Immanuel's land will be strictly in an earthly condition—they all will have bodies of flesh and blood, and so had Peter and John when they saw Moses and Elias on the mount of transfiguration: but the Spirit will be poured out from on high; and therefore the terror which mere human nature would feel in communication with such will be taken away, and the rulers of God's earthly city, and the princes of Israel will be able to govern the earth in righteousness and in wisdom, because heavenly persons will direct, and counsel, and aid them. Angels also will be there. "Hereafter shall ye see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

The prophets of the Old Testament are full of vivid and glorious descriptions of the blessings of Israel, and of the land of Israel in that day. "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness and all kings thy glory, and thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken: neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah, for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall

be married." But however fair this scene—however blessed the moral peace and outward rest of Immanuel's land, where the lion shall feed with the kid, and none hurt nor destroy, where the nations also shall learn to beat their swords into ploughshares, and be taught the knowledge of God—howsoever great these and similar blessings may be, or howsoever widely diffused, yet the millennium will not satisfy the desires which the Spirit of God will give, even to those who, being as yet in earthly bodies, may be supposed to find in such a scene a sphere of gladness peculiarly adapted to their condition: yet even they will "look for new heavens and a new earth," when the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. Their being glad and rejoicing in that which is then before them (for Jerusalem will be even then a rejoicing and her people a joy) will not take from them the more blessed anticipation of another and yet future hour, when they who will be as yet bearing the image of the earthly will be changed, and bear the image of the heavenly.

They will need the joy of anticipation—for though the earth will then be freed from the curse which now immediately rests upon it from God—though the sun will no longer scorch, nor the dry wind from the wilderness blight, nor the tempest destroy—though man will no longer faint, toiling with the sweat of his brow—though creation will no longer groan, as it now does, in the bondage of corruption,

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yet neither the earth, nor they who dwell in it, will as yet be brought into the *glorious* liberty of the children of God. And although Satan will be bound, and will no longer stimulate the evil of the flesh, yet the flesh will still exist even in the regenerate, whilst yet in bodies of sin and death, and will still, as ever, lust against the Spirit. And although the mighty power of God will be put forth in order to check the progress and manifestations of corruption and death, both in men, and trees, and plants, and animals; yet death and corruption, how much soever repressed and concealed, will still be there. They will be hidden under every form of beauty, and will manifest themselves at last, and be known as the consequences of sin, even till the hour comes when He who hath said that "new wine cannot be put into old bottles," will act upon this truth, and say, "Behold I make all things new."

The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots, neither can the intrinsic evil of the flesh, nor the character of the unredeemed body, be removed, even if placed in the very midst of God's own blessings. Sin and corruption must be sin and corruption everywhere; nor can repression satisfy the desires of the new man, which is "created according to God;" for not only does the necessity of repression imply imperfectness and evil; but it is in itself painful, because necessarily connected with resistance, watchfulness and trial. We need not wonder, therefore, that so little is said in the Revela-

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tion respecting the millennial period. It is rapidly passed over in one or two verses; the period of sorrow that follows it is almost made more prominent than the millennium itself; and the Bride of the Lamb, instead of being ushered into the scene, is kept apart from the millennial earth, and is not brought from her heavenly elevation into the sphere below, until the millennial earth and heavens have finally passed away.

It would seem, indeed, as though the millennium were the dispensation which is intended more than any other to teach us the hopelessness of the evil of the heart of man. For although Paradise has taught us one lesson of the evil of the human heart, and the antediluvian age another, and the Noahic another, and Jerusalem another, and the Christian dispensation another, yet which of these exhibitions of evil can be compared with that which is to be developed at the close of the millennial age? The earth will then be peopled from pole to pole—they who inhabit it will be the children of persons who perhaps all of them will have known and feared the Lord; for, I suppose, there will be some one period in the millennium in which "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the seas;"* they will still have before their eyes the bright glory and excellency of Immanuel's land; for its excellency will never fail, neither will its people ever fall from

* I regard this and similar promises as having their full completion in the new earth.

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their integrity—the glory of the risen saints upon Zion, and the brightness and holiness of the heavenly city above, will be before them also—all the experience of past ages, all the displayed excellency of God's power and goodness, as made known in the millennium, will have been opened to their souls; and yet what is the result? Not being really quickened by the Spirit of God, nor sprinkled with the blood of the new covenant, as soon as ever Satan is again loosed and tempts them, they fall away and dare to compass the beloved city, and "the citadel of the saints" on Zion. "They went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the citadel of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Satan himself is the immediate head and director of this last and greatest of all apostasies.

With this event the history of this fallen earth ends. The millennial saints, *so far as this earth is concerned*, will have no other prospect than this. Living waters may go forth from Jerusalem, and the waters of the earth may be healed, and the mountains rejoice, and the valleys be glad, and the pastures be clothed with flocks and sing, and many hearts be made happy; yet still over all this fair and blessed scene a thought of sadness will hang; for these very hills and valleys are again to be trodden by the foot of evil; and men, as many as the sand of the sea in multitude, are again to gather there in confederacy against God. Flesh will again

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corrupt its way, even on the millennial earth, and then at last God will cease to deal with the flesh any longer, and all things will be made new. "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the small and great, stand before the throne (*θρόνου*, not *θεου*); and the books were opened." After the dead have been judged, and death and hades cast into the lake of fire, "He that sitteth upon the throne saith, Behold, I make all things new;" and the new heavens and earth are created, and the heavenly city, which had been apart from the earth during the millennium, descends into it, still retaining the title of the Bride of the Lamb, and as such introduced into this new portion of His and her inheritance. "I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

"Bride" is a temporary—"Wife," an enduring name. At the commencement of the millennium she had been spoken of as a wife. "The marriage of the Lamb (it is said) had come, and his wife had made herself ready." During the whole of the millennium she retains her bridal estate; and at the close of it (for "a thousand years is with the Lord as one day") she is introduced into the new earth, still bearing the name of "Bride." Her relation to the earth during the millennium is de-

scribed in the subsequent part of the twenty-first chapter, and in the commencement of the twenty-second. It is in this description—the description of her condition during the millennium, that we alone learn the nature and excellency of her glory. Of the condition of the *new* earth, and her relation to *it*, little is said. A veil is drawn over this in the Scriptures. They lead us on to the period when the Son of God shall have subdued all enemies —and all things be made new—and God be all in all; but we know little of those eternal ages in which God, it is said, "will show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." We know not what new worlds may be created—what new spheres may be opened for the exercise of the power of those who shall reign in life. But the new earth made meet for the glory of Him who is "the Second Man, the Lord from heaven," will be the centre of the economy and order of creation; and it is as directing this economy, and as mistress of this order, that the Church is symbolized by this city, and named "Wife of the Lamb." It will not lose the glories of heaven—the glory which Jesus had with the Father before the world was—because occupation in the power of blessing is found for it in another and a lower sphere; and, therefore, this symbol of the holy city, great and blessed as it is, and even the name of the Bride, is but one presentation, in one especial sphere (and that not the highest)

of the manifold glories of them who are also children in the Father's house with Him who is the first-born amongst many brethren. He who "ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things," will not be restricted to a glory that is below the heavens; and He has associated His Church in His own glory, having made it "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." He who is "God over all, blessed for ever," will not be confined to this earth, however glorious, as His dwelling-place, neither will the redeemed family of God. The new heavens and earth may be the special sphere of glorified humanity, for the earth, it is said, hath been "given to the children of men,"—the centre, perhaps, of all the manifested government of God—the place, perhaps, where angels will peculiarly learn what the wisdom of God in the redemption of man is; but the inheritance of earth will not exclude from the heaven of heavens those who are also made sons of the Father—"children of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

The first eight verses of the twenty-first chapter carry us further into the future than any other part of the Revelation, or indeed any other part of the Scripture. They alone treat of the new heavens and new earth. In the subsequent part of the chapter we again recur to a preceding period, and are taught the relation of the heavenly city to the earth during the millennial reign.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

Notes on Revelation XIX., XX., and XXI.

THE nineteenth chapter commences the last division of the Revelation. In the preceding chapters, from the sixth to the eighteenth inclusive, the subject has been the chastisements from the throne of God which immediately precede the mission of the Lord Jesus in glory. But now the time has come for Christ to occupy His own throne, and to be manifested in the exercise of His own glorious power.

There is, perhaps, no part of the Scripture which needs more a new division of chapters. The first *ten* verses of the nineteenth should form a chapter by itself. It is a kind of introduction to the chapters which succeed, and stands to them just in the same relation in which the fourteenth stands to those which immediately follow it, viz., xv., xvi., xvii. and xviii. Both the fourteenth and these ten verses of the nineteenth consist of references, rather than descriptions; but these references are elucidated in

the chapters which respectively succeed. Babylon is first alluded to in the fourteenth; but it is an allusion merely—the description is given after. The wife of the Lamb is similarly alluded to in the seventh verse of the nineteenth; but the description of her glory is postponed to a subsequent vision.

The twentieth chapter should commence at the *eleventh* verse of the *nineteenth* chapter, beginning, "I saw heaven opened," and be continued to the end of the *eighth* verse of the *twenty-first* chapter: for the subject of all this passage is strictly consecutive. It begins by a vision of the state and glory of the heavenly Bridegroom, prepared to go forth against His enemies, and to subdue the earth —next the destruction of Antichrist and his armies —then the binding of Satan—the millennial reign—the concluding apostasy—the passing away of the first heavens and earth—the judgment of the dead—the creation of the new heavens and earth, and the descent of the heavenly city into the new earth. These events are spoken of consecutively, as they will really happen; and therefore the passage which treats of them in unbroken continuity should be read as one chapter.

The *twenty-first* chapter should begin at that which is now the *ninth* verse of the *twenty-first* chapter, and may be continued to the end of the Book, although the special subject of this passage, viz. the condition of the heavenly city during the millennium, properly closes at the end of the *fifth* verse of the last chapter.

The succeeding verses form the conclusion of the whole Book.

I have already referred to the manner in which the Scripture teaches by *recurrence*, i.e. by carrying on a subject to its very end, and then returning to the same subject, and adding new particulars, or filling up the outline that had been given. A remarkable example is afforded in the present instance; for here we find the introduction of the heavenly city into the *new* earth described previous to the description of its millennial relation to the *old*.

The following is the summary of the division proposed:

The first ten verses of chap. xix. form chap. xix.

Thence to end of 8th verse of chap. xxi. form chap. xx.

Thence to end of 5th verse of chap. xxii. form chap. xxi.

The rest forms the conclusion of the book of Revelation.

"*The marriage of the Lamb is come*," *&c.*] The marriage itself is not described: for it is not the object of the Revelation to describe that which is secret from the earth, but that which is developed before men.

In the descriptions given in the Old Testament prophets, of the glory of the earthly Jerusalem in the latter day, we find her sometimes spoken of as a

city, sometimes as a woman. Isaiah lx. affords an instance of the first: "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought." Isaiah lii. 2 is an instance of the latter. "Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." In either case it is a corporate or collective symbol or title, and admits of being indefinitely extended in comprehensiveness. So also the risen saints, as inhabiters of the heavenly city, are represented in a two-fold manner—first, by a woman arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; and, secondly, by "a city descending from God out of heaven, having the glory of God." Both are *corporate* symbols.

The linen (*βύσσινον* not *λίνον*) was the same as was found in the priest's garments of glory and beauty; and was used when the claim to righteousness was supposed to be established, and when the possibility of contamination was not in question.

"*Blessed are they who have been called to the marriage supper*," *&c.*] It is important to observe that the past tense is here used—*οἱ κεκλημένοι*, not those who are being called, but those who have been called,

and whose calling continues—such being the proper force of the perfect tense. "Guests at the marriage supper" is one of the dispensational names which now attaches to the saints. They, as well as those who merely profess the name of Jesus, are "guests at the marriage supper." (See Matthew xxii.) The guests are being now collected: "Behold I have prepared my supper, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, come unto the marriage." Such are the words of present invitation, and those who accept them become "guests."

The blessedness of these "guests"—those of them at least who are duly arrayed (for there was one who had not on a wedding garment) is to be manifested when the time comes for these words to be spoken, "Blessed are they who have been called." I have before observed how continually the Scripture is wont to use opposed or contradictory symbols in application to the same person or persons. This chapter supplies some remarkable examples. The saints are here represented, first as those who have been guests at the marriage supper; secondly, by one clothed in white raiment—the Lamb's wife; thirdly, by riders on white horses, following the King of kings; fourthly, by persons raised from the dead, reigning on thrones; fifthly, by the heavenly city, the Bride.

"*And I fell before his feet to worship him*," *&c.*] This, with the exception of the one similar, but

worse, because repeated instance, in the last chapter, are the only *recorded* examples of this apostle's failure after he had received the Holy Spirit. It was, of course, a sin to worship a creature. The strangeness and greatness of these things that he had seen and heard respecting God and His secret government, seem to have overpowered even John, and to have taken from him the peaceful calmness of love with which he had rested on the bosom of Jesus, and heard and spoken of the Father. Perhaps we, with our more feeble apprehensions both of the Father and of God, may sometimes have experienced an effect not dissimilar.

The reason assigned by the angel for forbidding the worship of John was this—that he (the angel) was only a fellow-servant of John, and a fellow-servant of John's brethren, who had committed to them the testimony to Jesus—that all that he (the angel) had done, was to bear testimony to Jesus by means of the Spirit of prophecy; and seeing that that Spirit came only from God, that God, and not he, was to be worshipped.

"*And I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse,*" *&c.*] I have already observed that it is the great object of the Revelation not to treat of the "harvest-field" (Christendom) whence Christ's saints are to be gathered; but it treats of the nations—the apostate nations—and of the manner in which Christ as King of kings will confront them by His own

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glorious power. Accordingly, these verses from the eleventh to the sixteenth inclusive, are not a description of the Lord coming from heaven, but a vision seen in heaven, teaching us abstractedly the character of power with which the heavenly Bridegroom will be invested in order to subdue His enemies, and to control the earth. Nothing can prove more clearly the abstract nature of this passage than the mention of the Lord's vesture as "dipped in blood." This will not be so when He first descends from heaven into the air—it will be the *result* of the infliction of the very vengeance which this chapter subsequently describes; yet it is an emblem well suited to teach us the character in which He will meet and act towards the nations when they first behold Him as King of kings, and Lord of lords. Again, if it had been the object of this passage to describe the manner in which the Lord will descend from heaven into the air, we should not have seen the saints following Him, for they will not join Him until He reaches the air; but they will form a part of His glorious train when He confronts the nations, and are therefore necessarily mentioned in a passage which specifically describes the glory with which He is invested for that purpose. "Horses" are symbolical of power intended for the earth; they would not be used to represent power to be exercised only in heaven. He that sat upon the horse "was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He doth judge and make war." This is the personal char-

acter of Him who was thus prepared to cast down the throne of wickedness, and to wear the diadems that had been resting on the head of the great destroyer. His eyes, which were as a flame of fire (the great emblem of the searching power of the divine holiness) and with which He had before tried the Churches, were now fixed upon the world and its wickedness. Many diadems—not *ten* merely, but *many* were upon His head; for He comes to rule *all* nations. "The armies which are (*τὰ ὄντα* abstract, not *ἃ ἔστι*) in heaven followed him upon white horses." Angels, I suppose, as well as saints are included in this description. In Luke we find this title applied to angels. "Immediately there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host." It is perhaps as leading alike saints and angels that Jesus will be known as Jehovah of hosts. The sword proceeding out of His mouth, symbolical of the destructive power of the word of His lips (for He speaks and it is done), is used only destructively —all against whom it is directed being destroyed— whereas the rod of iron breaks, but it does not necessarily destroy. It may become the shepherd rod of governance. It will break up the systems of the nations throughout the earth; for what tribe or nation is there from one end of the earth to the other, whose laws and order are not contrary to God and to Christ? But "the nations are given to him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession," and therefore howsoever

widely the destructive power of the sword may be exercised—howsoever the rod of iron may dash the nations in pieces, as to all their systems and confederations, yet it will be found a shepherd rod at last; and nations in bowing to it shall find their blessing.

"*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them,*" *&c.*] The first object here presented to the Apostle in vision was thrones occupied by certain persons to whom authority to rule was given. But this alone did not teach him either who the persons thus seated on thrones were, nor the nature of their power. Accordingly he beheld something more—he saw first the souls of the martyrs and sufferers for the truth's sake, specially those who had resisted Antichrist—he saw first their souls in a disembodied state, and then saw these souls "live," *i.e.* become reunited to their bodies; and then it is said, "This is the first resurrection"; and the nature of the power with which they were invested is described, viz. to be "priests of God and of Christ, and to reign with him a thousand years."

I think there can be no doubt that martyrs alone are *spoken of* in this passage; just as, in the fifteenth chapter, they only are *spoken of* as singing the song of Moses and the Lamb who have testified against Antichrist. In all these cases, I regard those spoken of as *representative* bodies, indicating by their position some one of the many spheres of glory

to be occupied by the one body of Christ. Thus also the seven Churches *represent* all Churches.

The Scripture is continually accustomed to connect the mention of certain peculiar promises with certain practical conditions of suffering; not thereby necessarily indicating that none except those in that condition have the final blessing spoken of, but because they who are so circumstanced best appreciate such promises, and most need the comfort they impart. We know certainly from other passages that *all* the saints who have fallen asleep will rise in the *first* resurrection.

"*Gog and Magog*," *&c.*] This must not be supposed to be the same as the gathering against Israel mentioned in Ezekiel xxxviii.; for that is clearly at the commencement of the millennium—*after* the appearance of the Lord and the conversion of the remnant in the land of Israel as described in Zechariah xii.; but *previous to* the establishment of the full millennial glory in Zion and in Jerusalem. The period between the day of visitation from the Lord on Jerusalem, and the establishment of His throne there in peaceful blessedness—in other words, the period between His manifestation as the morning star, and as the sun arising with healing on His wings, is of considerable duration. Many nations are rebuked and judged during this interval; Moab, for example, and Edom, and the nations mentioned in Ezekiel as in confederacy with Gog: I believe

these to be the nations which are now occupying the districts in the centre of Asia north-east of Persia—Bokhara for instance. I do not regard Russia as coming within the description. I believe the right translation of Ezekiel xxxviii. 3, to be "chief prince," as given in our version; nor do I recognise any affinity between Meshech and Tubal, and Muscovy and Tobolsk. Here, however, Gog and Magog are expressions evidently denoting generally *all* nations, and are not used so specifically as in Ezekiel, where the enumeration of the nations confederate with Gog is minute.

"*I saw the dead, small and great, stand before the throne,*" *&c.*] "Before the throne," is the right reading; not "before God." The throne is the same as is mentioned in the preceding verse. "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." It is a judicial, not a regal throne; and one set not abidingly, but for a special object, viz. the judgment of the dead. It is not the eternal throne of God, as seen in the fifth chapter, nor the millennial throne of Christ. Nevertheless, it was a throne occupied by Christ; for it is written that "the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The judgment of the dead is one of the branches of power attached to the kingdom of Christ.

There are evidently some who stand before the

throne whose names are written in the book of life: and they will doubtless be very many; for we may regard the millennium as the great harvest-time of the earth, when millions will be converted to God. An appeal to the book of life would, of course, prevent all whose names are written therein from being judged as criminals, or being in any sense put on their trial; and thus it would still remain true that "he that believeth shall not come into judgment." (κρίσις.) There may, however, be a reference to their works in the way of praise, or the contrary—just as is the case with respect to the saints of the present dispensation.

"*There was no more sea,*" *&c.*] This marks a very decided difference between the millennial and the new earth—for in the millennial earth the sea is frequently mentioned. The thoughts connected with it are barrenness, separation, and the power of death.

It is not until the new heavens and the new earth that creation, as a whole, will be brought into the *glorious* liberty of the children of God. We know not what that creation may then contain—neither the nature of the beings, animate or inanimate, that may be comprehended in it; but whatever shall then be known as "*creation,*" will be enjoying "glorious liberty," founded on redemption, similar to that which the heavenly city will be enjoying as soon as the millennium commences.

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There are two reasons why "creation," which is now groaning, is said to be waiting with earnest expectation for the commencement of the millennium —first, because, though not at that time brought into glorious liberty, it will nevertheless be freed from its present "bondage to corruption"; and secondly, because it will behold in the heavenly city, and in the redeemed bodies of the glorified saints therein, a specimen and earnest of its own future glory. Throughout Scripture the millennium is to be regarded, not as a final state, even to those who are enjoying its full blessedness; but merely as an instrumental link, a step onwards into that blessed period when the flesh shall cease to be, and all be brought into suitability of condition to Him who is the Second Adam—the Lord from heaven.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

On Revelation XXI.

BEGINNING AT VERSE 9.

IT has been already observed, that it is not the object of the Revelation to describe in detail the condition of the earth during the millennium. That, the Old Testament had already done; and accordingly the twentieth chapter, in which (if any where) a description of the millennial earth would have been found, rapidly passes over that period, and hastens on to the consummation, when all things are made new.

But although the Revelation cannot be said to describe the millennial condition of the earth, yet there is no part of the Scripture that opens to us so full a view of what the millennium is; because there is none that similarly reveals the heavenly glories of the saints, and shows the instrumentality which is prepared above, in order to effect God's purposes of blessing in the earth.

When we read of the risen "Church of the first-born," occupying that sphere of glory repre-

sented by the elders seated by the side of the Almighty throne—or as invested with the power of the cherubim—or as standing around the Lamb upon Zion—or as singing the song of Moses upon the sea of crystal, we see, in all these diversified presentations of their manifold glory, the symbols of a power whereon the earth will be made dependent for its blessing.

But however necessary these high glories of the saints may be to the government and blessing of the millennial earth (and they are all necessary—all links in the chain of the appointed order), yet in none of the previous visions do we find heaven brought into such close, and, if I may use the word, systematic relationship to the earth, as in that which we are now about to consider. It is the vision of the heavenly city that shows us the glory of the saints brought into its closest adaptation to the need of a fallen earth. It is under this aspect that they are first called the bride of the Lamb; and although the heavenly city does not descend into the millennial earth, yet it is the bride of the Lamb throughout the millennium, and as such partakes in the interests and employments of her Lord—ministers to those to whom He ministers, succours those whom He succours, is arrayed in the excellency of His glory, and shares in the homage rendered to Him.

A city is the emblem of associated and ordered life. It is the place where character is developed,

and where habits of thought and action are displayed. If a metropolis (as in this case it is) it becomes, throughout its appointed sphere, the centre from which and through which all vivifying influence is diffused. The habits of the saints, their relations one to another and to God; the results of their being what they will be in understanding, affection, and feelings—all this must be developed somewhere, and it will be developed there; and it will be developed in such excellency, that this city will be the home of the affections of Christ. It will be His spouse—He will trust in her, joy in her, and find her one who responds to His affections, enters into His thoughts, and adorns Him by her excellencies even in the courts of His highest glory.

She is, however, described in this chapter chiefly, I might perhaps say entirely, in relation to the earth; and therefore the description must be regarded as only partial. She is looked upon as seen from below, rather than as known within herself; and although the excellency of the symbols which denote the character of her glory in her displayed relation to the earth, teach us much of her dignity and beauty, yet we learn it as in the distance; we are instructed, as it were, without the walls. The vision supplies us with the aspect which she will bear to those without, rather than with the knowledge that will pertain to those who dwell within. John saw externally and afar off.

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We must therefore regard this vision as teaching us what she will be in the apprehensions of the millennial saints who dwell upon the earth, rather than as a full revelation of all the secrets of her excellent glory.

Her chief characteristic is her heavenly origin. She is not of the earth. She is that city "whose maker and builder is God." "He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God—her light like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." She descended *out of heaven from God*, not indeed as yet to be on the earth, but to become over the earth, from the heavens above, the earth's new centre of light and influence in the stead of that city which had made all nations drunk with the wine of the wrath of her fornication. That city had been emphatically from beneath. She had been the great result of the wisdom of ages, stimulated and assisted by the skill and energy of Satan; and together with the beast had ruled the earth for a season. But now she who had been prepared by God—His gift to the earth—His gift also to His own beloved Son—the Bride of the Lamb, was come to minister to the earth heavenly blessings, and to shine toward all nations in the true light of the holiness and glory of God. "Her light was like unto a stone most precious." I have before spoken of the symbolic meaning of

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precious stones. We have seen them once on the breast-plate of the high priest of Israel, the type and the pledge of the moral grace and outward glory which finally will attach to all the Israel of God. It is no unintelligible emblem to have one's name written on that whose lustre is as enduring as itself, and which shines most when brought into nearest connection with the light of God. But, howsoever blessed this type—howsoever clearly it indicates the final condition of the whole family of God, yet it fails in teaching us the full secret of our blessing. The high priest, as ministering before God, stood separate from, and contrasted with, the glory of Him before whom he served. There was nothing that spoke of union with God. But when we read in this Book of the brightness of the jasper stone, first seen in the person of Him who sat upon the throne, and then read of the same bright lustre attaching to the heavenly city, it teaches us, not merely the nature of that brightness, but also the source from which it flows, and where it is preserved for us, and why it will be *in* us, even because we are "IN Him that is true," that is, the true God. "The church of the first-born," when the time comes for the heavenly city to descend, will have been brought into full realized union with Him, and been made recipients of His fulness; and will, therefore, shine according to His excellency. He who is Light will be there; and there will be nothing in her to hinder, nothing to dim, the pure effulgence of

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His glory. Nothing can be more transparent than crystal — nothing more bright than the jasper — nothing more resplendent when fully illumined by the light of God. Such will be the light of her glory then. "The nations," it is said, "shall walk by means of the light thereof." She will be the temple (*ναός*) of the whole earth.

But it was not glory merely that made Christ the light of this world when He was in it, in the midst of its darkness. We read indeed of light connected with glory, but we also read of "*the tender mercy* of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death—to guide our feet into the way of peace." Light would be a sorrowful thing to such a world as this, unless it could come as a light of gentleness, and love, and peace, as well as of holiness and glory. And it will. "God is love." Love has been manifested in Jesus, as it yet again will be, and in others also made like unto Jesus in His glory. And, therefore, the hour of the manifestation of this glory will be no hour of destructive and consuming brightness; but it shall be as "the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." Such will be the effect of the dawning of the light of the holy city, the bride of the Lamb, upon a stricken and terrified earth, to which, as brought at last under the applied power of redemp-

tion, she will minister together with Him the pure blessings of goodness.

Nor will her ministry be that of love only—it will also be the ministry of grace. Her very name teaches this; for she is not called the Bride of Christ merely, but the Bride *of the Lamb*. Love was known in Paradise, but redemption has brought in *grace*; it has caused grace to abound where sin abounded. Accordingly we read of the heavenly city having, not the throne of God merely, but "the throne of God *and of the Lamb*." And it is from this throne, thus established in the supremacy, not of power only, but of grace, that the river of life issues—on either side of which grew the tree of life, whose leaves, it is said, "were for the healing of the nations." Nothing can more plainly mark the relation of the heavenly city to another sphere external to itself, in which sorrow and sickness, as the consequences of sin, still linger. Being itself under the shelter of the power of God in redemption, and having itself tasted of the blessedness of grace (for they who inhabit that city will have been sinners, once dead in trespasses and sins), it will not be slow to apply the ready instrumentality so graciously provided to meet the need of those still dwelling in the unredeemed and sinful body below. The ready hand of love will be put forth from the heavenly city to stop the avenues of sorrow in the earth beneath; and the workings of death, when it yet lingers, will be checked by the ministration of a more abundant

power of life. And although she from whom and through whom these blessings will be ministered, will never enter upon a fallen earth so as to dwell therein, but keeps herself apart in pure and heavenly separation until her heavenly Bridegroom has subdued every enemy and made all things new, yet the ministration of blessings from her is unceasing from the moment that she becomes the bride of Him who will then be known as the Lord of the whole earth; for how could it be otherwise where there is love that yearneth to give, and need crying to receive—and stores inexhaustible to be given—and grace that has removed every hindrance? And accordingly we read that her twelve gates (which were all of pearl, for it is the *holy* city) were ever open towards all the four winds of heaven: "on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates, and on the west three gates." And even as blessing emanated thence throughout all the earth, so also was the grateful homage of the nations returned, as if in recognition of its goodness. "The nations shall walk by means of the light thereof, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour unto it. And the gates shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations unto it."

They will bring it, no doubt, *mediately*. For, as of old, no offering could be brought by the worshipper further than the outer court of the temple, and the

priests alone could minister at the altar, or enter into the sanctuary; so here, likewise, none but the priests of Israel, *i.e.* the risen church of the first-born, will be able to enter into this city whose gates are of pearl, and her streets like unto fine gold. But there will be another city on the earth—the earthly Jerusalem—the "beloved city," whose "gates also shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring there the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought." It is the earthly city that will form, as it were, the exterior court of the temple of God; and whilst itself owning the better glory of the heavenly city, will yet be the place where the nations can resort to own the supremacy of the city of God, and to render homage to Him who dwelleth therein. Accordingly, the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel were severally written on the twelve pearl gates of the heavenly city, as if to indicate that it stood in a special relation to them—that it was *their* sanctuary—and that their priesthood alone, that is to say the risen saints, could enter within its walls; so that, although the twelve gates did look east, and west, and north and south, and did embrace the scope of the whole earth for blessing, yet it was not apart from Israel. The gates, guarded by angels, were specially *their* gates —and they were made the mediate link between the nations and the city of God. The remarkable words of Moses, that "when the Most High divided to the

nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel," are thus perhaps explained. God, when He undertakes the government of this earth, will return to His own original principles when He first divided the sons of Adam. He had His own intentions respecting Israel even then—and they will be fulfilled in their season—so that the arrangements of the nations shall be adapted to the arrangements of that princely people from whom, and through whom, their order, and dignities, and regulations shall flow.

But whilst the faithfulness of God to His earthly people, and the honour reserved for them, is indicated by the inscription of the names of their patriarchs on the gates of the heavenly city, yet a different and far higher honour is assigned to those who have followed Jesus; for the *foundations* of the wall of the city bore "the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Their labour has not been in vain in the Lord. It was by means of the truths which the apostles ministered, that the people of God were first separated into their heavenly separation on the earth; and whilst girt about thereby, as by a wall, the Church was strong against its enemies without, and separated to God and blessing within. Those truths, indeed, were not recognised in the world as beautiful, or glorious; they little shone in the eyes of men like clear jasper;

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nor did the Church itself long value its separation, or keep with holy foot within the sacred inclosure. The walls have been cast down, and there is "burning instead of beauty." Nevertheless the truths so ministered are eternal — for they are the word of God: "Sanctify them by thy truth: thy word is truth;" and they will one day be recognised in their preciousness and beauty, when the city of God shall appear. The same blessed truths by which we now seek to fortify the weak and fainting heart—the same truths that we press as involving separation from all that is simply of the earth, are the truths which will be then fully recognised by those within, and those without, that city, as having given it its everlasting strength—its everlasting separation also unto God, His holiness, and His glory. The symbol sufficiently expresses His estimate of their preciousness—a resplendent wall of pure jasper.

I have said separation unto the glory and holiness of God; for the city and the street of the city were alike of pure gold like transparent glass. We read of gold in the inner courts of the tabernacle. It was the emblem of divine excellency—the type of the divine nature of Christ, in its full excellency, as appreciated in heaven; and, therefore, found only in the inner courts. The priests ministered in a golden sanctuary;—the altar—the table—the vessels—the boards—and the mercy-seat were all golden. But they did not stand on gold—neither did they dwell in mansions of gold. They stood with unshod foot

upon the earth, surrounded indeed by what was heavenly and divine; but not themselves standing in the power thereof, nor in competency of action according thereunto. But they who belong to this heavenly city, seeing that they are to dwell with Him who hath said, "Bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh"—with Him who is to inherit all things—His spouse and His companion, arranging with Him and for Him the things of His household—exhibiting the character, and habits, and order, which beseem the palace of the great King—must be able to live where He liveth, and to walk where He walketh, even with a foot that fears no contrast with the transparent purity on which it treads. It is a condition too great to be comprehended by any save those who have powers of apprehension and appreciation derived immediately from God. The city could only be measured by a *golden* rod. But when this was applied, it was found to be perfect; it was a cube—the emblem of entire perfection.

Such is the place designed for the development of that economy which distinctively belongs to the redeemed. We know not what new worlds—what new things may be dependent thereon, or how angels may learn therein the manifold wisdom of God. It will be the place in which they who have known sin and the curse, who have seen failure in others, and failure in themselves, and learned the value of grace and the need of Almighty power to strengthen and to uphold, will find themselves con-

sciously set as a seal upon the heart and a seal upon the arm of Him who loved them with a love stronger than death, and commissioned them to act in the power of the same love towards others.

Such are some of our prospects. "He said unto me, These words are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets hath sent his angel to show unto his servants things which must come to pass speedily. And behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book." The prospects of the world, as given in this Book, are, Babylon, Antichrist, judgment:—of the Church, the throne, the heavenly city, and sovereignty together with Christ. Faith recognises both; the latter as its own portion—the former as that which affords to it the occasion of watchfulness, service, and testimony. He to whom it was given to see these visions of glory, ate also the book that became in his belly bitter. The former was for his comfort in hope; the latter supplied him with the subject of his testimony "against (επι) many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

There is an awful fixedness given to the condition of the world by the words, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." Strictly taken, they would unchangeably determine the condition of men from the moment that the Lord uttered them; in which case, for the last eighteen hundred years, conversion

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would not have been, and the Bride would have ceased to say, "Come." But it has not been so. The Spirit and the Bride have said, even as they still say, "Come"; and they who have heard, have said, "Come"; and many have come, and taken of the water of life freely. But the fact of these words having prophetically passed the lips of Jesus, not only marks the time when they will be fully ratified, as being very nigh, when the sentence shall finally go forth, and the doom of each be irrevocably fixed, according as his work shall be; but they may be understood also as intimating that from that hour forward, even till the day of His appearing, there should be no change in the general aspect of mankind; but that they should remain in all essential features what at that hour they were. "The generation was not to pass away." Its moral characteristics were to continue and become deepened. Already the mystery of iniquity had begun to work—already there were many Antichrists. The Churches also had begun to fail in their testimony; He knew the consequence, and that nothing now remained but the interference of His own Almighty hand.

Yet in testifying to the Churches, He cannot but speak words of comfort; for He hath loved them, and freed them from their sins by His own blood, and He hath made them a kingdom—priests unto His God and Father; and therefore we find Him speaking of Himself, and saying, "I am the root

and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Sweet words of comfort, which the Churches, whether fallen or unfallen, have to treasure during the period of their sojourn here, as the pledge of the earthly and heavenly blessings, which, in the title of His redemption, He will yet cause to arise like the morning light, upon a disordered and ruined world.

He has been planted in the earth as the root to David and to David's house of all those blessings promised in the covenant "ordered in all things and sure," although as yet it hath seemed not to grow. Dishonoured and despised as "a root out of a dry ground," and even uprooted from the earth, He nevertheless liveth hidden with God, being the Root of David still. And in due time He shall be manifested again, and then "the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." But He is "the offspring" as well as "the root of David." Experience has taught us that, however sure the source, however excellent the blessings given, yet that they are originated in vain for such as we, unless there be also provided as a depository, one fitted to preserve that which is given—a nail driven in a sure place. And such is Jesus. Being the offspring, and therefore the heir, of David's house, on Him, as such, all the glories of that house by inheritance devolve; in Him they find their safe resting-place, and are secured for ever.

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But He is not merely a root planted in the earth, nor the heir merely of an earthly house. He has other essential glories of His own. "Before Abraham was, I AM." He is "the root and offspring of David, AND the bright and morning star." I have already spoken of the star as the symbol of distant and unearthly glories derived from high and unknown spheres, into which the eye of man, as man, can never penetrate. It is in such glory, strictly unearthly and divine, that Jesus will come. It will be the true light of God's own glory and holiness arising suddenly on the deep darkness of the world's night. It will not be at first "the sun arising with healing on his wings" (for the day-star precedes the sun); but it will be the sudden visitation of strange and distant glory, suddenly breaking in upon the abyss of darkness beneath. He will come as the Son of God "in his own glory and in his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels," and it is into such glory that "they that are Christ's at his coming" are to be taken; for His promise is, "To him that overcometh will I give the morning star."

Such are our expectations; all resting upon the sufficiency of the redemption that is in His blood; for His own words are, "Blessed are they that wash their robes,* that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the

* Such is the true reading.

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city." It is not difficult to conceive the joy with which they who have been made personally like their Lord, and shared in the brightness of His glory as the morning star, and seen the earth quail before His judgments, will enter on the arrangements of that heavenly city, which shall spread over the ruined scene, peace, and joy, and blessing. May our souls then be settled in the grace of this redemption! May we see the darkness around us in the light of the testimony of this Book, and in the light of the glory also, which is ready to be revealed; and then we shall be able, with chastened and understanding hearts, to rejoice in His appearing, and to say, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus."

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CHAPTER XXIX.

Notes on Revelation XXI.

Verse 9.

At this verse (verse 9) a new chapter should commence. The preceding *eight* verses had described the introduction of the heavenly city as the bride of the Lamb into the *new* earth which the heavenly Bridegroom had created for her. During His millennial reign over the *old* earth, He subdues every enemy, and afterwards, causing all former things to pass away, by His almighty power as God, He makes all things new. The first eight verses of the twenty-first chapter describe the heavenly city ushered into the new earth thus created as an inheritance.

But in the ninth verse the subject changes. We go back to a previous period, and learn the relation of the heavenly city to the *old* earth during the millennium. The heavenly city commences to exist at the beginning—not at the close of the millennium. We might therefore be expected to inquire what its relation to the earth during the millennium

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will be; and this inquiry is answered in the passage before us.

It must carefully be observed that the descent of the heavenly city mentioned in the *tenth* verse is different from, and in time prior to, the descent which is mentioned in the second verse. In the latter case it descends *into* the new earth; in the former case it descends *towards*, but does not enter the millennial earth. During the millennium its position is *intermediate* between heaven and earth; just as the holy place in the Tabernacle where the priests ministered (to which it is the antitype) was intermediate between the holy of holies which represented heaven itself, and the outer court where Israel worshipped on the earth. There was contiguity and connection between the various courts of the Tabernacle; but they were different, and had different services. Accordingly, throughout all the millennium there will be a careful distinction maintained between the heavenly places with all pertaining thereunto, and the earth and the things therein. The inhabitants of the heavenly city will minister to the sickness and need of the millennial nations (see Rev. xxii. 2), but the heavenly city itself will never enter this fallen earth. It will wait until all things have been made new and suited to Him who is the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Then, and not before, it will be said, "the tabernacle of God is with men."

The contrasts are very marked between the mil-

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lennial and the new earth. In the millennial earth there will be the possibility of disobedience (*Zech.* xiv. 17) and consequent plague (*Zech.* xiv. 18); there will also be death (Isaiah lxv. 20), that last enemy not being destroyed till the close of Christ's millennial reign—and not death only, but destructive judgment, as is seen when fire comes down from heaven to devour those who apostatise at the close of the millennium. None of these things can occur in that new creation of which it is said, "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things have passed away." Rev. xxi. 4.

Our knowledge of the millennium, as to the earthly blessings then to be granted to Israel and the nations, is gained almost exclusively from the Old Testament. We there learn how glorious the name of the Lord God of Israel will be made throughout all *the earth*; but we should know little of that glory which is to be set *above* the heavens, if we had not the visions of the Revelation. If holiness, peace, and joy are to be maintained in Israel and Jerusalem; if they are to be made "a praise in the earth," it is because they will be subjected to the supervision and control of those whose unearthly glories the visions we have been considering in the Revelation are intended to unfold. The glories of the risen "church of the first-born" are given there.

We must carefully remember, however, that the

highest, because everlasting, blessings of the millennial saints are not found in those parts of Scripture which describe their earthly prosperity and glory; nor even in those which declare the majesty and excellency of the glorified beings who will watch over and minister to them from above. The parts of Scripture from which we derive our fullest knowledge of the *essential* and eternal blessings which will pertain to millennial Israel, and to all who, like them, shall be "sanctified by faith," are the Epistles —those same parts of Scripture which now teach *us* our essential blessings. This has been strangely overlooked by some who, because Israel do not belong to "*the Church of the first-born*," have therefore excluded them from *the Church*, and have written as if there were two gospels—two ways of salvation—two kinds of Christianity; one for us now, another for Israel in the millennium.

But all this is delusion. When the Apostle says that "in the flesh no good thing dwelleth"—that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God"—that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," he states eternal principles of truth, which will be as true in the millennium as now. So likewise, when he says, that all in whom the Spirit of God dwells are (as estimated by God) "in the spirit and not in the flesh"—that all such are "children," "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ"—and that all who receive the gift of righteousness through faith shall finally "reign in life";

he states great and eternal principles of blessing, which will be as true of the millennial saints as of ourselves. Any truth that is founded on what man is in the first Adam as fallen, or on what redeemed man is in the second Adam, must be an eternal truth. There is no saintship, either in the millennium or now, apart from regeneration; and all who are regenerate are united with Christ risen; and all who are united with Him will be like Him, and will see Him as He is, and will bear His heavenly likeness in the new creation. It is not merely "the church of *the first-born*" that Christ has loved, He has loved "*the Church*"; and the Church is a name that comprehends all the redeemed. "The church of the first-born" will be complete when the Lord returns; they will have a peculiar compensation for their peculiar sorrows, for they will share the glories of their Lord's millennial reign; but *the Church* will not be complete until the millennium ends, and they shall share the glories of their Lord's *eternal* reign, when the new heavens and new earth shall be made, and when all the redeemed "shall reign in life through One—Jesus Christ." It is observable too, that, up to the hour when the new earth is created, the heavenly city to which the Church belongs retains the title of Bride of the Lamb, and, as such, is introduced into the new heavens and new earth. The fact of the heavenly city being formed at the commencement of the millennium, no more prevents individuals from being afterwards added thereunto,

than the fact of the earthly Jerusalem being spoken of as "married to the Lord" at the beginning of the millennium, prevents individual Israelites from being afterwards born into its blessings. The symbols which denote the Church are corporate symbols; and corporate symbols always admit of being indefinitely enlarged in comprehensiveness.

Circumcision, the early "sign and seal" of the covenant of grace, when it was first formally made with Abraham, is a type pre-eminently Israelitish. And what does circumcision indicate? Not the improvement of the flesh, as some have said; but *abscision* of the flesh, and consequent separation from it. And how is this antitypical circumcision effected? It is effected by God through the death and resurrection of Christ, with whom God has united all the redeemed. In Christ they are brought into that new condition of being into which nothing that is of the flesh enters. In Him risen, they are "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands." Such is the explanation of the type of circumcision as given by the Apostle in the Colossians. So early was it indicated that the great distinctive blessing that attaches to *all*, who are, by faith, children of Abraham (whether they may live in the millennium or before) is separation into that new condition of heavenly being, into which union with Christ in resurrection brings all the redeemed.

It would indeed be a bitter and sorrowful thing

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(how would the Apostle Paul have felt it so!) if Israel, because of their present blindness, had for ever lost the great distinctive blessings of redemption. But God "hates putting away." (Mal. ii. 16.) "His gifts and calling are unrepented of." (Rom. xi.) He loves to enlarge, not to narrow, the flow of the streams of His blessings. He purposes not that the blessings which He has now given through His Son (such for example as the *eighth* chapter of the Romans reveals)—He purposes not that such blessings should be confined to a small remnant from among the Gentiles, who have not only feebly appreciated them, but have failed and dishonoured God whilst using them. God's purpose is that these self-same blessings should, in "the age to come," flow down on the head of Israel, who, when the veil is rent from their eyes, will see in "the church of the first-born" those who have preceded them indeed, but not supplanted them, in the possession of blessings which are Israel's proper inheritance. To them "pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." (Romans ix. 4, 5.) *Our* blessings flow from a root which properly belongs to them, we being engrafted branches. If we are "the first-fruits" they are the "lump"; and "if the first-fruits be holy the lump is also holy." Our acceptance as

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first-fruits implies the succession of Israel into similar blessings. (Rom. xi. 16.)

Blessings such as those that are indicated by "sonship" and "citizenship" in the heavenly city, which is "the bride of the Lamb," are not, be it remembered, mere *official* distinctions. Children of a monarch may hold different positions under the government of their parent. One may command an army, another a province, and the like; and such distinctions would be esteemed official. But if some of the children were admitted into their father's house as children, and others excluded—if some were permitted to love him as their parent—whilst the others were only allowed to serve him as their sovereign, would such distinctions be deemed official? To be admitted into the same nearness of love, and to be endowed with the same powers of loving, is necessary to the perfectness of the redeemed, and cannot be wanting to those who rise inwardly and outwardly changed into the likeness of Christ. "I shall be satisfied when I awake up in thy likeness."

Nothing can be more important than to guard carefully the unity of the redeemed. Dispensationally, the redeemed from Abel to the last millennial saint will be found to have differed widely here. But dispensational differences, however important here, are not transferred into heaven. Heaven is not to be a transcript of earth. There is a power of unity in Christ paramount to all distinctions here,

whereby all the redeemed will finally be brought into a unity of which we shall never understand the real power, till we know even as we are known.

It is in the *new* earth that I look for the *full* accomplishment of the promise that "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea"; nor till then do I expect the *complete* fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, that he should be "the heir of the world"—or of that to the meek, that "they shall inherit the earth." Angels have no special place assigned to them as distinctively theirs. They dwell in the heaven of heavens which is God's; but men have a peculiar inheritance—"the earth hath he given to the children of men." Indeed, so peculiarly is it esteemed theirs, that when the heavenly city enters it, it is said, "the tabernacle of God is *with men*," as if He had become a visitor to *their* abode. Yet it will be a new and, if I may so say, a heavenly earth; nor will its possessors, because they receive it as an inheritance, be excluded from heaven as their home. All the redeemed will bear the heavenly likeness of Christ (1 Cor. xv.), and will inherit heavenly glory. The new earth may be the assigned place for the redeemed to manifest what they are, as men in glorified humanity; whilst in another sphere, even in the heaven of heavens, it will be shown what they are, as united to Him who is "God over all blessed for ever."

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"*The foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with every precious stone.*"] The twelve precious stones are the emblem of all completeness and all variety of lustre. What a wonderful character is marked hereby as attaching to the truths ministered by the Apostles of the Lamb: how precious and excellent in beauty! Such are the truths with which we are now conversant, and have to bear them through a rude and sin-defiled world which knows not, and cares not for, their loveliness. It gives us a striking view of what the new earth will be, to think that the foundations thus garnished will rest in it, appreciated and undefiled.

"*I saw no temple therein.*"] In the temple God was approached mediately—through priests, altars, &c., which implied a distance from the perfect knowledge of Himself. But the inhabitants of the heavenly city know immediately Himself. Nevertheless, the heavenly city is itself as a temple towards the earth, and therefore we read that we shall serve Him day and night in His temple.

"*They shall bring the glory and honour of the nations unto it.*"] Εἰς is either "*unto*" or "*into*," according to the nature of the object spoken of. It implies access into the nearest proximity possible or permitted.

"*And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come.*"] Here

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is another remarkable instance of a name applied to us *prospectively*; for we are not as yet "the Bride," save in the knowledge of faith. But even as we shall doubtless say, "Come," when standing in our glory, and when the pure river of water of life, in appreciated excellency, shall flow from the throne of God and of the Lamb; so now also, knowing through faith, that the stream of life is silently and secretly flowing through the wilderness, we, as new creatures, and the Spirit also who dwelleth in us say, "Come," and they that hear are to catch the sound, and spread it far and near throughout the wide earth.

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APPENDIX A.

Note on Psalm CX. 1.

THE Psalms, in referring to the Lord Jesus, for the most part confine their descriptions to that which He once was when manifested in humiliation, or to that which He will be, when again manifested in His millennial glory. They seldom refer to His present condition whilst seated, as He now is, on the throne of the Father—withdrawn (because rejected) from the earth and hidden with God. The first verse of this Psalm, however, is an exception. "JEHOVAH HATH SAID UNTO MY LORD, SIT THOU AT MY RIGHT HAND UNTIL I SHALL HAVE SET THY FOES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET."* This verse refers specifically to the *present* relation of Christ to Israel and to the earth below: and therefore, as bearing so peculiarly on this present dispensation, is quoted more frequently than any other by the Lord and His Apostles. It teaches us that howsoever long God may bear with evil, yet that the power of His throne will finally be put forth to gather

* ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου.

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Christ's enemies that they might be set as a footstool for His feet.* "This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations." The gathering of Antichrist's hosts, first to Armageddon and then to the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel iii.) "unto the battle of that great day of the Almighty God," will fulfil this Psalm. Then the footstool will have been set—then the rod of Christ's *power* will be sent out of Zion—then it will be said unto Him, "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies"—then His earthly people Israel, who have so long refused Him during the day of His weakness and of "the foolishness of preaching," shall at last be willing in the day of His POWER—the first-born of the millennial day fresh in the youth-time of that morning of joy.

The words, "until I shall have set thy foes a footstool for thy feet," have an apparent verbal similarity to the words of another Psalm, "Thou hast put all things under his feet." Accordingly they have not unfrequently been confused, although they should very carefully be distinguished one from the other.

The words of the eighth Psalm, "Thou hast put all things under his feet," could be used of Christ,

* Aben Ezra, commenting on the latter part of this verse, explains it thus:—"But the right hand of the Lord shall fight on thy behalf; and he shall set thy enemies the stool for thy feet, who shall be brought before thee that thou mightest trample on them."

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as soon as He ascended into glory, and *are* so used in the Ephesians,—"which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places . . . *and hath set all things under his feet.*" These words are now true of Christ, in virtue of His personal exaltation high above all heavens, and of the title of supremacy already granted to Him by God. *He* is exalted, and God hath put all things under His feet *in title*, though we do not as yet, as the Apostle says elsewhere (Heb. ii.), see all things actually subjected to Him. The long-suffering which postpones "the setting of the footstool," is one reason why we do not as yet *see* this.

The words, therefore, of the eighth Psalm are true of Christ now, and have been true ever since His ascension. They became true at the moment when Jehovah said unto Him, "Sit thou at my right hand." The session at God's right hand, and God's "having put all things under His feet," are coincident *past* truths: but the setting the footstool is *future*—the *result* of the former two. It is in consequence of God's having in title put all things under Christ's feet, that God will, when the appointed hour comes, set the footstool.

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APPENDIX B

On Revelation V. 9.

Ηγόρασας τῷ Θεῷ ἡμᾶς.

"Thou hast redeemed us to God."

THE word ἡμᾶς (us) which has been rejected by some critics, is very properly retained by Dr. Tregelles on grounds which he thus states :—

"This word (ἡμᾶς) is *omitted* by the Codex Alexandrinus; and also in the loose paraphrase given by the Æthiopic version it does not appear."

"On the other hand it is read in *all other* MSS.* and versions: so that as to MSS. it is the Codex Alexandrinus against *all* others, and that too when the MSS. are supported by versions of great value and variety. These are the Latin, Coptic (or Memphitic), and Armenian; to say nothing of the Syriac, which is in the Revelation comparatively modern, or of the Arabic or Slavonic, which accord with the rest in inserting ἡμᾶς, but which are in themselves of no importance in criticism."

* Of these one only B (*i.e.* Codex Basilianus in the Vatican—not *the* Vatican MS. which does not contain the Revelation) is in uncia letters; for C (the Codex Ephraemi at Paris) is here defective.

Yet important as this verse is, we are not exclusively dependent on it for determining that the elders and the cherubim symbolise the redeemed in certain aspects of their future glory. In cases where the context does not immediately explain the symbols employed, a safe method of interpreting them is this:—Ascertain what other parts of Scripture which are not symbolic reveal respecting the subjects in question. Then seek to express in Scripture-symbols the truths thus ascertained. If we find the symbols we so select to be similar to those which the passage we are considering employs, we need feel no hesitancy as to the interpretation.

NOTE.

[The evidence in favour of the author's argument is very much stronger now (1904) than it was when he wrote the foregoing Appendix in 1853. Since that date two Uncial manuscripts have come to light—one of the eighth century, known as P, and another as ancient as any that is in existence. The latter was discovered at Sinai, in 1859, by Professor Tischendorf, and is cited as ℵ. Both read ἡμᾶς in Rev. v. 9. There are, then, four Uncial MSS. now extant, containing this part of the Apocalypse, of which *three* contain the word as against *one* that omits it. Of the three, one (the Sinaitic) is of the middle part of the fourth century, and the other two are of the eighth. The one which omits ἡμᾶς is of the fifth century. Thus the most ancient MS. evidence is overwhelmingly in favour of the reading here advocated, and is supported by the Versions, and by most of the later Manuscripts. The author truly says in "Remarks on the Revised Version," page 330:—"If readings are not determined by a preponderance of evidence such as this, evidence can be of no avail."

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An assertion that gets first into the field, even if subsequently proved to be erroneous, is hard to kill. (Prov. xviii. 17). The year after Tischendorf's great discovery, Mr. Wm. Kelly was publishing a Greek Text of the Apocalypse with Translation, much on the same lines that Tregelles had eleven years previously. In it he gave a list of certain corrected readings which, he said, Tischendorf had privately supplied to him from the Sinaitic MS., and among them was the omission of ἡμᾶς in this verse. Dean Alford was then writing his great work, and quoted from Mr. Kelly's publication this erroneous statement as coming from Tischendorf. (See Alford's Greek Testament, Vol. IV., page 262, of the 1861 issue.) Dr. Tregelles wrote at once, assuring him he had seen the word in the manuscript at Leipzig. In reply, Dr. Alford assured his friend that in the second edition the matter should be rectified. He died, however, before this could be done, and although the subsequent editors have, of course, corrected the MS. item in the list of readings, where it can have very little influence, both the Text adopted and the Commentary remain erroneous upon this important point.

In a similar way Bp. Christopher Wordsworth's Critical and Expository Greek Testament, which has had, perhaps, an equal influence to Alford's, said so late as 1872 that "ἡμᾶς (us) is not in ℵ," and in the Commentary he expounds accordingly. His later editors likewise have silently deleted that mistake, but Text and Comment remain. So that these two works, which have influenced English exposition of Scripture to a very large extent for a whole generation, gave their weight to propagate a mistake. It is not surprising that the Speaker's Commentary and the Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and the Revised Version present the results of a bias thus given, notwithstanding the powerful documentary evidence against their reading.

It may prevent confusion if it is here pointed out that the Codex called B in the footnote above is the same that is called Q in "Remarks on the Revised Version," p. 330, and in Tregelles' Greek Testament. As there are two Vatican MSS. known as B, it was proposed by Tregelles that the later—the eighth century one—should be re-named Q. See his introduction to Part IV., page 3. The suggestion was not adopted.]

THE END.

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